



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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Bridging the Generation Gap with Fitness

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There is a growing trend with both the youth and the adult population of America. We are getting fatter at an alarming rate. Nearly 1 out of every 3 adults is considered over weight, and thirty percent of that population meets the criteria for being obese. Recent government statistics (released by the American Physical Therapy Association) reveal 17 percent of our nation's children are overweight making this a problem that carries over into all aspects of our lives from work/school performance to injury rates, and to healthcare costs. There are steps we can take to assist our children in their physical education and many start by looking at our own habits and life-fitness choices.



Being overweight and obese has complications medically. These two conditions are directly related to increased rates of diabetes, heart disease, stroke, hypertension, gallbladder disease, osteo-arthritis (degeneration of bone and joints), sleep apnea and other breathing problems, some forms of cancer (uterine, breast, colorectal, kidney, and gall bladder), complications during pregnancy, stress incontinence (urine leakage caused by weak pelvic floor muscles) and psychological disorders such as depression.

Those who are overweight or obese generally are less productive in the workplace, and the classroom. The total cost for lost revenue secondary to obesity is 3.9 billion dollars. Consider the following numbers:

Workdays lost: 39 million per year

Physician office visits related to obesity: 62 million visits

Prescribed restricted activity: 240 million

Its easy to stand on the mountain and tell people to exercise lose weight and eat healthier, but without practical applications to these suggestions the message will return with an echo. How active are we supposed to be and how do we "fit" it into our daily schedule?

You must make an active and conscious decision to live a healthier lifestyle. Like anything new in your life you have to adopt it and apply it. Saying you'll order better things off the menu at your favorite restaurant may not be enough. You might need to change where you eat for awhile. Go someplace that has healthier choices. "Less temptation easier application" Don't stock junk food in your home, eating from boredom is typical. For those with hectic schedules and don't have the individual time to take away from kids and family you may want to try the following:

Limit the time you and your children or spouse spends watching TV, playing video games or surfing the net. TV commercials make you crave what you see.

If you and your family are watching TV play a game, wrestle, do push-ups and sit-ups, and gymnastics during the commercials

Plan active weekends involving exercise, bowling and bicycling are 2 examples. Provide a positive reward system for your child engaging in physical activity, like candy right nooooooooooooo, workout clothes a new basketball; maybe a pair of roller skates or just verbal praise are examples.

Set an example for your child by regularly exercising and trying new activities. Don't focus on the scale for your child or yourself, rather go by how you feel how your clothes fit etc. Give lots of positive feedback to your child about their appearance and their effort.

Don't set goals for weight loss instead set activity goals like daily walks, and bike rides.

Make small changes first. Ease into to your new lifestyle it will last longer than fad diets, or any quick weight loss strategies.

Remember to strengthen the most important muscle of all, your heart. The benefits of exercise are well documented. It gives you more energy and more strength, controls blood pressure, helps you handle stress. Exercise is essentially the great equalizer. Treatment for diseases like high blood pressure, osteo-rthritis, osteoporosis, and chronic pain syndrome all recommend regular exercise. The American Heart Assn recommends 5-7 days of exercise per week 30-60 minutes per session.

What intensity and type of exercise is right for you? The type of exercise that is most appropriate for you may not be the same for your neighbor or child. The best thing to do is prior to starting on a regular exercise program, visit your doctor and make sure you do not have any physical problems that may complicate your fitness quest. If you are not familiar with the exercise equipment you'll be using taking the time to do a supervised orientation or spending time with a personal trainer would be worth your while. Exercise and healthy living is a habit like anything else. Make changes and develop programs bases on exercise science and fitness fact, not work -out myths, and urban diet legends. The most successful diet has time and again proven itself to be a well balanced one. For more information about diet and exercise visit the following websites: www.active.com, www.americanheart.org, or just search the web under beginner exercise programs (just don't spend too much time on the computer).

Kevin Green is a Physical Therapist Asst., Aquatic Rehabilitation Specialist, Combined Decongestive Therapist and Speed Agility and Quickness Instructor for Carolina Sportscare and Physical Therapy. He is one of the many professionals dedicated to providing the highest level of healthcare, fitness and, massage therapy programs in the Low Country. For information on starting an exercise program under the supervision of personal trainer, or a massage therapy appointment to smooth out those sore muscles after initiating your New Year's resolution, call Carolina Sportscare and Physical Therapy (843)521-1970.