



Flexible Fitness

The Fitness Motivation Monitor



Keeping "IN" Your Program

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Fed Up with
Diets and Exercise
That Don't Work?

You're not alone!
Call 530.873.0377
for help!

Keeping "IN" Your Program

In last month's issue, we started planning for the holidays, identifying what happened in prior years to throw you off your fitness program so that this year you could be prepared. Did you do your "homework?" Do you have a sense of what you need to do differently this season?

The biggest obstacle my clients encounter is the temptation to put their good fitness habits on hold during the holidays, or any hectic time in their lives. The key is to avoid all-or-nothing thoughts and to consciously choose to keep "in" your program. Beware of the temptation and be flexible in your approach:

- "It's too difficult to exercise when the kids are home for winter break – I'll get back to my program right after they go back to school."

If you put exercise off until life is back to "normal" – the kids are back in school – you risk putting it off for a lot longer than you intend. Look at the specific period of time that your typical exercise routine will be disrupted and modify accordingly. You can cut down on your number of sessions and/or decrease the duration of your sessions.

- "I'm so stressed during the holidays that I lose weight by not eating, so it's okay if I don't exercise."

Your health and sanity are much more important than a few pounds – exercise is not all about weight loss. Exercise will help reduce stress, so modify your program and fit it in. You'll be much better prepared to handle all of life's challenges if you keep on track with your program.

- "The holidays only come once a year. It's okay if I indulge a little more than usual. I'll start fresh in the New Year."

I encourage you to enjoy your favorite holiday foods. That doesn't mean a change in eating habits. The same rules apply: eat when you are hungry and stop when you are satisfied. Overeating is what causes problems – anytime of year.

Though this time of year tempts us to put fitness habits on hold and let New Year's resolutions make up for it in January, keeping "in" your program will help you to handle the stress of the holidays more easily, leaving you feeling healthier, happier, and more energetic. Can you imagine a holiday season like that? Me too!

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Message from the President

With Thanksgiving approaching, we naturally turn our thoughts to gratitude. Good health makes it to the top of most gratitude lists, but for some people the thanksgiving is greater than most – recovery from an illness or injury.



Over the years, my experience in the fitness profession (and, admittedly, my own tendencies) shows me that it frequently takes a lack of health – even something as simple as the common cold – to appreciate our health. Not only that, but most people I talk to tend to focus on a litany of complaints about their bodies.

We always strive to improve our bodies – that's part of the journey. Focusing on the negative, though, does not, in most cases, motivate us to improve. Rather, complaints turn into bad feelings and excuses to not exercise or take care of ourselves.

I encourage you this month to make a list of everything about your body for which you are thankful. Look at it everyday and add to it when you think of something new. I guarantee you this positive focus will inspire you to treat your body with respect and good habits.

To your health,

Gillian Hood-Gabrielson

Flexible Fitness, President

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A History of Chocolate

In October of last year, we started a new series on everyone's favorite - Chocolate! Why chocolate when this is a newsletter about health and fitness? Some of you have heard my teleclass called, "Chocolate Doesn't Make You Fat!". In this class I talk about Intuitive Eating, which enables you to eat the foods you love without binging or feeling guilty.

A couple of months ago, I met Carrie Brown, a fabulous woman who has a business providing high quality chocolate! If you are going to eat it, make sure you get the good stuff! Check out Carrie's website at www.carriebrown.com and try some for yourself! Chocolate makes a GREAT gift!

The name "Carrie Brown" is written in a decorative, golden-brown, cursive-style font with a slight shadow effect, set against a white background.

Carrie will be giving us an education on chocolate in the coming months. This month we continue with ...

DID YOU KNOW?

Fine chocolate can actually help lower your cholesterol.

At certain times of a woman's monthly cycle her body craves magnesium - fine chocolate has a high magnesium count.

Real vanilla is only used in fine chocolate. Most household brands, 'family chocolate', contain vanillin, an artificial vanilla which is easily smelt and produces a nasty aftertaste.

Cocoa contains over 500 distinct flavor compounds resulting in an extremely complex blend of flavor and aromas.

Chocolate melts at 34°C, just below body temperature, it therefore melts immediately when it is placed in the mouth.

In the 17th Century hot chocolate was made with a selection of spices and peppers to flavor the cocoa – Try it, experiment, it's good.

The best cocoa comes from Criollo beans. These used to be the main source of cocoa but they now only represent 4% of world production.

Chocolate contains phenylethylamine, an amino acid which has aphrodisiac properties and is also good for helping to ease a hangover.

In 1900 Queen Victoria sent specially made chocolate bars to soldiers fighting in the Boer War as a New Year's greeting.

WHO LOVES CHOCOLATE?

It's a well established fact that most people love chocolate, last year chocolate lovers in the U.K. alone, spent over £3 billion (\$4.5 billion) on, and consumed over half a million metric tons of it! U.S. Consumers spent more than \$7 billion and ate 2.8 billion pounds (1.27 billion kilo's), representing nearly half of the world's entire chocolate production.

The average U.S. citizen eats 12 lbs (5.45kg) of chocolate annually, second only to the Swiss who consume a staggering 22lbs (11kg) per person per year. Unfortunately the bulk of the money spent by the average Briton and American was wasted on mass produced, low grade high sugar products. The Swiss however spent their money far more wisely as anyone who has tasted Swiss chocolate will testify. But you don't have to go to Switzerland to get good Chocolate!

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At-Home Exercise Equipment That Doesn't Break Your Budget

Maybe you have several exercise videos, some tubing, even a few free weights and a stability ball. It's amazing all that you can do with these few items.

But are you getting a bit bored with these old standbys, or maybe reached a plateau with your results? You'll be happy to know you can add to your "home gym" with items that are relatively inexpensive and take up almost no room compared to bulky treadmills, stationary bikes, and the like.

These three pieces of equipment will add a new component to your workouts and

challenge your body in new ways, reaping better results.

- **Balance Disc** – These inflatable "discs" come in various sizes and can be used for squats, abdominal crunches, and a variety of balance/stability exercises. Prices range from \$30-\$50.
- **BOSU ball** – This is a stability ball with a flat bottom. Just about any exercise done on the ground can be done on a BOSU, making it more challenging. It helps to improve balance and core (deep muscles of the back and abdominals) strength. It is priced at around \$120.
- **Slideboard** – It's low impact, offers a lateral (side-to-side) workout (an important crosstraining component), and can really get your heart rate going. Best of all, it rolls up or slips right under a bed. Most models range from \$200-\$300.

Consider an instructional video or some form of coaching to walk you through using these new items so that you are properly trained. Go slowly, gradually building up your abilities – soon you'll be making the most of your new equipment, and seeing great results!

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You Can Eat Out AND Eat Healthy

A common dilemma is how to eat healthy when eating out. It's easy to control factors such as fat, cholesterol, fiber, sodium, and, of course, portion sizes, when you eat at home, but how can you keep good eating habits at restaurants?

In today's environment of health conscious consumers, many restaurants have healthy or "lite" choices on their menus. Without such options, consider the menu as is and be aware of those items higher in fat and calories, such as fried foods and sauces. Consider asking for salad dressing and other high-fat condiments on the side so that you control how much you eat.

One technique I like to use with salad dressing is this: I dip my fork tines into the dressing before taking a bite. This way I get a taste of dressing in each bite and I find that I use only about one-third of the dressing I'm served. A BIG calorie savings without any loss of eating pleasure.

As large portion sizes are prevalent at many eateries, assess how hungry you are and how much food you are realistically able to eat, before you start eating. Literally make a fist with both of your hands, put them together (the size of your stomach is about that of two fists), and compare them to the amount of food on your plate to determine how much you will eat. Some of my clients find it helpful to physically separate the amount of food on their plate and ask for a to-go box up front for what they know they will be taking home.

In the quest for restaurants that offer healthy options, the September 2004 issue of IDEA Fitness Journal reported that the work has been done for us! *Child* magazine looked at over 125 restaurants – each menu was reviewed by five nutrition experts – to determine which ones offered the healthiest choices. Here were their top picks:

1. Legal Sea Foods
2. Mimi's Café
3. Red Lobster
4. The Melting Pot

5. The Old Spaghetti Factory
6. Benihana
7. Ruby Tuesday
8. Chili's Bar & Grill
9. Elephant Bar Restaurant
10. (tie) Bertucci's
(tie) Chevy's Fresh Mex

I'm encouraged by the variety of restaurants (from seafood to pasta to Mexican) and that most of these restaurants I've heard of! See any that you like? Bon appetite!

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