



Flexible Fitness

The Fitness Motivation Monitor



They're Coming...

Message from the President

A History of Chocolate

Reduce the Strain of Stress

But What if I Don't Like Super Foods?

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

**You're not alone!
Call 530.873.0377
for help!**

They're Coming...

They're right around the corner... the holidays will be here before you realize. I don't say this to scare you or make you anxious – quite the opposite. My hope is that the holidays can be a source of pleasure, enjoyment, and even relaxation – that you continue to take care of yourself, staying fit and healthy. But how?

Experience shows that preparation is key to enjoying a stress-reduced holiday season. From late November through to early January our schedules often consist of vacations, celebrations, kids off from school, parties, potlucks, and more. It makes sense to start preparations now.

Begin by taking a look at how your holidays flowed last year, or even the year before. What threw you off track? What caused your exercise program to go on the back burner for a few weeks (or, ultimately, months)? What triggered episodes of overeating? What caused the most stress, headaches, etc.? Identifying what you would have done differently last year lets you play Monday-morning quarterback – you can make the changes this year so that the same problems don't occur. Here are some ideas to get you thinking:

- Did last-minute shopping throw your schedule into disarray? Start shopping now (parking far away, of course, to burn those extra calories). Buy gifts to have on hand, such as host/hostess gifts to bring to a last minute dinner or party.
- Do you need to shorten your workouts during this time, or need an indoor workout option for when the weather turns cold and wet? Buy a couple of exercise videos or DVDs (you can even check them out at some local libraries – but if saving time is an issue, buy them online). DVDs can be programmed so that you only do certain segments of the workout, which comes in handy when you're tight on time.
- Start thinking creatively about exercise/activity. Make a list of activities you can do with the kids (when was the last time you were on ice skates?) If "formal" exercise is difficult to squeeze in, shift your focus to being active – shopping, volunteering... you can track your calories with an accelerometer (a small pager-like device worn on your waistband) to ensure that you get in enough movement.
- Begin researching quick and easy healthy cooking recipes for parties and potlucks, as well as at-home meals.

With a little preparation, the holidays will be a breeze – soon everyone will be asking, "How do you do it?"

~ [Go to Top](#) ~

Message from the President

Okay, don't shoot. I know you probably don't want to

think about the holidays, but they're coming, ready or not. My goal with these last three issues of the year is to help you prepare as best you can so that you stay fit, healthy, and happy all season long.



For some, October acts as a bit of a buffer: summer is over and kids have returned to school but the holidays are more than a month away. Used wisely, this time period can help pave the way for a smooth remainder of the year. For those whose holidays begin in October, carve out little slots of buffer time throughout each day to take care of yourself. It will pay off in added enjoyment and serenity.

Life always offers us buffer time and if we don't take it, sometimes it is forced on us. Pushing too hard, working to get too much done can bring illness or injury. I imagine this is why so many people get sick during the last couple months of the year. Flu season aside, the people I know who take care of themselves stay well. May you stay well, and enjoy!

To your health,

Gillian Hood-Gabrielson

Flexible Fitness, President

~ [Go to Top](#) ~

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!

A stylized, golden-brown signature of the name "Carrie Brown" in a cursive, script font.

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!

~ [Go to Top](#) ~

Reduce the Strain of Stress

People often say how stressed they are and while they know exercise would help them better manage that stress, they often can't find the time to fit a workout in amongst the chaos. Can you relate?

Try these three strategies to better manage stress and find time for exercise – which is really finding time for you!

1. Removing clutter from your environment helps you to focus and feel better. Do you look for the same things over and over again? Do you work longer than you have to because of disorganization? Do you have multiple gym membership cards or gym bags, never able to find what you want when you need it? Studies show people with cluttered environments waste a lot of time. Are there any areas of your life that could use a "de-clutter?"

2. If you are a regular exerciser, don't let stress stop you. Modify your routine, even if it means ten-minute workouts or simply adjusting your routine to fit in extra activity (taking the stairs, etc.) The overwhelm that often accompanies stress can be reduced with exercise. Allowing positive fitness habits to be lost in a pattern of inactivity will only lead to more inactivity. The physical benefits of exercise are significant in managing stress and it's important to feel in control of being able to do something good for yourself.
3. Can you let go of anything when your schedule gets busy (other than exercise, of course?) It's easy to just add more work on to what you are already doing, letting your personal care suffer. Most planning and organization systems recommend prioritizing everything you need to do on a daily basis. What on that list could you let go of, or ask for help to get done?

~ [Go to Top](#) ~

But What if I Don't Like Super Foods?

I'm all for maximizing the nutrition from the foods we eat, but what if you don't like all of the "Super Foods" praised throughout the nutrition community? You'll be glad to know there is middle ground between collard greens and fried zucchini.

Included in this issue of the Fitness Motivation Monitor is a recipe for spaghetti squash with pumpkin seed pesto – let's look at three of the main ingredients to see what you're getting for your nutrition buck.

Pumpkin seeds are high in zinc, which is good for the prostate and boosting the immune system. They also contain fatty acids that kill parasites, plus a fair amount of fiber and potassium (good for balancing out sodium when high blood pressure is a concern.) Pumpkin seeds are best eaten raw to retain their nutritional value, making a quick and easy snack.

Spaghetti squash contains almost no fat and is very low in calories and sodium. Not many foods you can say that about!

While olive oil, like all fats, is 120 calories per tablespoon, this unsaturated fat is a good source of the antioxidant, vitamin E, and has been linked to a variety of health benefits, including: lowering the risk of heart disease; reducing in the level of LDL (bad) cholesterol; lowering of blood pressure; and the stimulation of the gall bladder to secrete bile, which helps to prevent gallstones.

Spaghetti Squash with Pumpkin Seed Pesto

Serves 4-6

Wondering what to do with all those pumpkin seeds after carving out Jack-o-Lanterns? Enjoy this fun fall recipe.

1 spaghetti squash, baked
Pumpkin Seed Pesto (recipe to follow)

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Bake the spaghetti squash until it yields slightly to pressure, but still firm, approximately 30 to 45 minutes. Remove the seeds and pull spaghetti strands with a fork. Toss the spaghetti strands with Pumpkin Seed Pesto (below) and serve. *Tip: Don't try to cut raw squash – it doesn't work well!*

Pumpkin Seed Pesto

3 cloves garlic (more or less to taste)
1 tsp. salt Black pepper, freshly ground
2 cups fresh basil leaves
1 cup pumpkin seeds (raw)
1 cup olive oil

Combine garlic, salt, and pepper in food processor and chop finely. Add basil leaves and pumpkin seeds. Blend until ground. With motor running, slowly add olive oil and blend until well combined.

As a variation, add steamed or raw vegetables, sun-dried tomatoes, or artichoke hearts to the basic recipe for a heartier meal.

~ [Go to Top](#) ~

Contact me

Gillian Hood-Gabrielson
Flexible Fitness for You
5905-D Clark Road, Paradise, CA 95969
530-873-0377 Gillian@FlexibleFitnessforYou.com

