



Saline County Employee Newsletter

THREE COMMON WALKING MYTHS, BUSTED!

by Jodi Helmer

When it comes to exercise, walking doesn't always get the respect it deserves — and it's time that changed. Before buying into the idea that walking isn't a worthwhile workout, learn the truth behind these three common walking myths.

MYTH #1—10,000 STEPS IS THE HOLY GRAIL

There is a great feeling of accomplishment when your fitness tracker buzzes to signal you hit 10,000 steps. But Carol Ewing Garber, PhD, professor of movement sciences at Columbia University, believes it might be an arbitrary target.

Yes, there are studies that show walking 10,000 steps per day is associated with lower blood pressure and improved glucose tolerance but the idea of walking the equivalent of five miles per day could feel overwhelming to new exercisers.

“[Walking 10,000 steps] will result in health benefits,” Garber says. “But it should be noted that ... there is benefit even with small amounts of walking and the benefits increase with the more steps you walk each day.”

Garber suggests aiming for 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise each week instead of setting a step count goal.

If you want to count steps, consider this: Walking an additional 2,000 steps per day — even if your current step count is minimal — helps lower body mass index and boost insulin sensitivity, according to research published in the journal BMJ.

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“Providing opportunities for employees to develop healthier lifestyles and supporting an adoption of habits attitudes contributing to their positive well-being.” - Saline County Wellness Committee

THREE COMMON WALKING MYTHS -CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE...

MYTH #2—WALKING DOESN'T HELP WITH WEIGHT LOSS

Leslie Sansone, fitness expert and creator of Walk at Home Workouts is adamant: “Walking works for weight loss!”

A slow stroll around the block isn't going to move the needle on the scale (although it does burn more calories than binge watching legal dramas). To lose weight with a walking workout, Sansone suggests high-intensity interval training or HIIT.

Picking up the pace — without breaking into a run — at regular intervals during your walk has a major impact on weight loss.

In one small study, researchers at the University of Virginia found that overweight women who logged three 30-minute, high-intensity walks and two moderately-paced walks per week for 12 weeks lost six times more belly fat than women who went for a slow stroll five days per week. A second study found that varying speed burned up to 20 percent more calories than maintaining the same pace.

Incorporating HIIT into your walking workout is simple, according to Sansone. After a 5-minute warmup walk at a slow pace, walk at a brisk pace for 30 seconds and then a regular pace for 4 minutes. Repeat the interval four times. End with a 5-minute cooldown walk.

“Walkers have so many choices to get fit and stay fit for life,” Sansone says.



MYTH #3—WALKING IS ONLY FOR THOSE WHO CAN'T RUN

Walking can be a “gateway exercise” that helps new exercisers improve their cardiovascular fitness and stamina to transition to running but not all walkers want to run — and that's OK.

“Walking is a good exercise for everyone,” Garber says.

A study published in the journal *Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis and Vascular Biology* found rates of hypertension, high cholesterol, heart disease and diabetes were lower for regular walkers than runners.

While a walk around the block is a good start, maximizing the benefits of a walking workout requires logging sufficient time in your sneakers. Garber suggests focusing on distance, duration or calorie expenditure (all viewable on your fitness tracker) noting that it's the amount of exercise that counts — for both walkers and runners.

“If you start fitness walking today, you will instantly feel better and know you're doing something good for your body, mind and soul,” Sansone says. —end

“It's Niagara Falls! It's one of the most beautiful natural wonders in the world! Who wouldn't want to walk across it?”

- Nik Wallenda

FOUR WAYS TO CREATE A GREAT MORNING ROUTINE —SERAINE PAGE

When you wake up each morning, do you start your day off in a rush?

If so, it might be time to consider creating a familiar morning routine to slow you down.

Morning routines can increase productivity, positivity, health, and reduce stress throughout the day.

Developing a morning routine can be difficult, but is worth the effort. For non-morning folks, giving yourself something to look forward to in the morning (coffee, anyone?) can make it easier to get going.

Starting off the day organized builds confidence that the rest of the day will go smoothly. When you have a productive morning routine, it's guaranteed to make your morning that much more efficient.

Ready to get started?

Here are four easy ways to start the day off right:

1. Move Your Body

Get moving first thing in the morning to immediately boost your energy. The later you push off exercising, the less likely it's going to happen as your day unfolds. Even if you do some light stretching or yoga, it helps your circulation and heart rate to get going.

Morning stretching or exercise can:

1. Increase circulation and flexibility
2. Gets your metabolism going
3. Help you stick to the habit
4. Energize your body

Research shows that working out in the morning can help improve overall sleep, which may lead to weight loss. Make your morning exercise routine an appointment you can't cancel on yourself. Consider it as important as a standing coffee date with a good friend — if you miss it you'd be disappointed and less energized.

2. Make Your Bed

Now that you're an adult you probably thought you could get away with not making your bed, huh? Studies actually show your mom was right that making your bed is important to do. According to National Sleep Foundation research, bed makers tend to rest better at night. In fact, 62% of sleepers felt that sleeping in a tidy bedroom helped them feel more relaxed.

Why bed-making matters:

1. Starts your day with a sense of accomplishment
2. Makes your room more inviting
3. Leads to other organized habits

Also, who wants to wrestle with bed sheets and "making" your bed just before climbing in for sleep? When you don't have a crumpled mess to climb into, it makes it a much more relaxing atmosphere to doze off in.

3. Drink a Glass of H₂O

Most of us struggle to drink the suggested amount of water daily. Start your day off right by downing a glass as soon as you get up! Have a glass by your nightstand or by your sink in the morning to remind you to start hydrating.

Why your body needs water ASAP in the morning:

1. Rehydrate to get your energy levels up
2. Can give your metabolism a boost
3. Gets bowels moving

To remember how much water to drink throughout the day: Recall the 8x8 rule of thumb. That's eight 8-ounce glasses. Hate plain water? Add fruit for a refreshing drink and essential vitamins. Here's a water challenge to start drinking more H₂O!

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ONLINE LEGAL RESOURCES

Continuum EAP's online resources includes a library of 100+ free fillable legal forms, including:

- Wills/Living Trusts
- Bill of Sale
- Rental Agreements
- Promissory Note

To get started, visit 4continuum.com and click "MEMBER LOGIN" at the top of the page. Use Saline County username and password. Contact HR or give Continuum a call if experiencing difficulty.

MAY WELLNESS QUESTION OF THE MONTH

The positive, good feeling your body derives from and produces when exercising includes the release of endorphins and what other chemical?

Answer:

BONUS: 25 WELLNESS POINTS for correct answer

**Answer to the April Question: "EASTER"*

Email your name and correct answer to: salinewellness@gmail.com

**All answers submitted for the Question of the Month must be received prior to the subsequent month's newsletter distribution.*

GREAT MORNING ROUTINES

- CONTINUED FROM PAGE #3

4. Use a Gratitude Journal

When you start your day off with a grateful heart, it creates a positive vibe that can last all day. Set your alarm for a few minutes earlier to make time to reflect on your blessings or happiness. You can even include this as part of your meditation or prayer practice.

How to get the most out of your journaling:

1. Take it to pen and paper
2. List 3-5 things you're grateful for every day
3. Review your list when you're having a tough day

For best results, try to journal daily. It will allow you to discover thought patterns and build self-awareness. Not a writer? Make a bulleted list in your phone.

Your Productive Morning Routine Will Take Time

The benefits of a morning routine are worth the effort.

Some of the most powerful entrepreneurs and leaders have had their morning routines documented and written about over the years. There's something to be said for daily habits of the most successful people in the business world.

So, why not give it a try? It all starts with a plan and some steps.

A nighttime routine can improve morning routines, too. Finding little ways to create a slower pace in the morning might mean doing a few tasks at night like picking the next day's outfit, meal prepping for the week's lunches, etc.

Above all, remember that habits take time to develop and form.

Ease into a new routine, and know it's okay to add in steps to improve the flow. The idea of creating a routine is to reduce stress, not add to it.

If it doesn't work for you, ditch it ASAP. Your morning routine will be as productive as you make it, and personalizing it to fit your needs will make it work the best. *-end*



Can Exercise Help Reduce Depression and Anxiety? - by Elizabeth Millard

Exercise has been linked to a breadth of health benefits, including cancer prevention, bone density, heart health and many others. Best of all, while you're boosting your body, you'll also be helping your brain, according to numerous studies.

Many people feel a change in emotions like sadness, anxiety, indifference and anger during and just after a workout, but regular physical activity can also help your mental health in a long-term way as well. That's because when you lift your mood, it often leads to other healthy changes, like eating better, stressing less and getting more sleep. All of those shifts work together to keep your emotions on the upswing, according to Dr. Rita Aouad, who specializes in psychiatry and sleep medicine at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center.

"If you're feeling anxious, it can have a ripple effect that increases your negative thoughts because you're not sleeping well and not eating healthy foods," she says. "But that ripple effect goes both ways. When you start increasing healthy behaviors through one habit, like exercise, you often see other good habits begin to take hold."

What's happening in the brain during and after exercise to kick off this happy chain reaction? Let's take a look:

CHEMICAL REACTIONS

When you exercise, you kick off a cascade of biological reactions, and one of the biggest is the release of endorphins, the body's "feel-good" chemicals.

These activate certain receptors in your brain that work to reduce your perception of pain and increase a feeling of well-being. This is the "runner's high," which tends to switch on after you've been exercising for a short amount of time.

At the same time, the activity releases proteins that cause nerve cells in the brain to grow and make new connections — this improvement in brain function makes you feel better, according to Steven Hicks, PhD, of the Penn State College of Medicine.

He notes the degree to which this happens can vary from person to person — and may depend on how your genes operate — but everyone has the ability to tap into this process.

As these reactions are happening, they can reduce fatigue and improve alertness, which can be helpful if your depressive symptoms or anxiety are caused by stress. With better resistance to stress, your brain operates more efficiently when it comes to cognitive tasks and also physical ones like respiration, heart rate regulation and immune system function.

"The more you're active, the more likely your brain will be able to handle heightened stress situations later and support neuronal survival," says Matthew Capolongo, NASM performance enhancement specialist and a coach at New York-based Professional Athletic Performance Center.

GUT-BRAIN CONNECTION

The positive changes in your brain are important when you exercise, but there's another vital area also getting some love: your belly.

There's increasing awareness that anxiety and depression may be linked to gut health, and that part of your body is so influential on your thoughts and emotions that it's called your "second brain." Researchers have suggested irritation in your gastrointestinal system may send signals to your central nervous system that could trigger mood changes.

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EXERCISE FOR DEPRESSION & ANXIETY—CONTINUED FROM PAGE #5

What's helpful in keeping your gut on track? No surprise, it's exercise. One study finds cardiorespiratory fitness is correlated with increased diversity of good gut bacteria, and other research has noted exercise's role in boosting serotonin — another “feel-good” chemical that is predominantly produced in the digestive tract.

SMALL DOSE, BIG RESULT

One of the best pieces of news about better mental health through exercise is you don't need to become a marathon runner or work out six days a week to reap the benefits.

A recent study in JAMA Psychiatry found just 15 minutes of vigorous physical activity — similar to what you'd find in a HIIT session — or an hour of moderate exercise like walking reduced the risk of depression by 26%. Researchers also noted a lack of exercise may increase your risk.

In an accompanying editorial, New York psychiatrist Adam Mourad Chekroud, PhD, noted that in randomized clinical trials, people who were assigned to exercise groups had greater depressive symptom reduction than those who were not. Also, individuals with depression who were taking antidepressants were significantly more likely to recover with regular workouts than those who exercised less.

The upshot is you don't need to be psyched for workouts to see the benefits, and you may even prevent emotional downturns in the future.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Although exercise has an incredible range of benefits for physical, emotional and mental health, it's not a cure-all when it comes to conditions like depression or anxiety disorders.

Getting more physical activity can be very helpful, but if you still experience symptoms of depression, such as hopelessness, disinterest in activities that used to excite you, mood swings, sadness and persistent irritability, consider talking with a health professional. —end

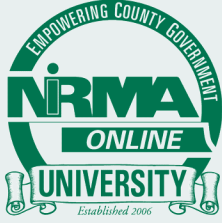
Dozing off

WITH DIGITAL MEDIA

Is your child falling asleep with technology aglow? Children's eyes are not fully developed, and research shows their eyes are more sensitive to light than the eyes of adults are. This can affect the brain and disrupt circadian rhythms (the biological clock).

Lack of sleep can contribute to excessive tiredness at the end of the school day, grade slippage, conduct problems, loss of interest in other pursuits, depression, and an increase in suicide risk.

Make rules early-on concerning the use of digital media. Doing so later won't be as easy. —end



**APRIL—JUNE, 2019 —
NIRMA ONLINE
UNIVERSITY CLASS**

The upcoming quarter offers the following NIRMA Online University course. Successful completion provides 75 Wellness incentive points by completing the following offering:

- ◆ **“High Blood Pressure—Reducing Your Risk”**

***Next Wellness Committee**

Meeting: Thursday, May 2, 2019 in the Courthouse Conference Room, 8:30 a.m.

***Next Safety Committee**

Meeting: Wednesday, May 8, 2019 in the Courthouse Conference Room, 8:30 a.m.

WELLNESS COMMITTEE

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co.saline.ne.us/webpages/
committees/wellness.html

Log onto the Wellness webpage online to review meeting minutes, Wellness newsletters, annual Program document and Fitness Center information.



CRAZY EIGHT CHALLENGE

For those who had chosen to participate in April’s “Crazy Eight” Challenge, your completed challenge sheets are due to be returned by the end of the day Monday, May 6th. Excellent work! –end

100 MILES—100 DAYS CHALLENGE

Winter is OVER! Now might be a good time to get outside and enjoy the weather, or prepare to start!

Beginning May 1st, Walk, Jog, Run, Bike or Row the “100 Miles in 100 Days” Challenge. Begin your journey through spring and summer using this event to provide motivation and enabling you to earn 100 or more Wellness Points in the process!

This annual summer challenge will begin this year on May 1st, 2019 and end on August 8, 2019.

Rules/Guidelines:

- 1) You **MUST** complete a minimum of 100 Miles to earn 100 or more Wellness Points.
- 2) *Daily work related miles walked are not to be included in your mileage tally.*
- 3) If you are biking or rowing, 2 Miles on bike/rowing machine is equal to 1 recorded Mile.
- 4) Did more than 100 Miles? AWESOME! Earn ONE extra point for EACH additional mile completed over 100!
- 5) Record Double-Miles on holidays that occur during this Challenge.
- 6) Make sure to record your exercise for the challenge in your Wellness Booklet as well; as counting for exercise completed for those days is even MORE points!
- 7) Questions regarding the challenge can be directed to any wellness committee member.
- 8) Remember: You do NOT have to walk one mile each day, you just need to complete a total of 100 miles by August 8th to qualify for points earned.
- 9) Return completed challenge sheets before the end of the day on Friday, August 16, 2019. -end

NOTE: Articles found in this newsletter are for informational purposes only and are not intended as medical advice. For further information, please consult a medical or legal professional.