



WEEK TWO

Last week's Thanksgiving newsletter helped you build your foundation for balance, joy and good cheer this holiday season with a sensible approach to eating well. This week's issue provides you with inspiration and strategies for maintaining regular physical activity during the busy holiday season. While you may consider exercise to be "just one more thing to do," regular exercise is essential for helping you stay balanced this holiday season. You'll also find some great ideas for using those Thanksgiving leftovers.

A Season of Balance, Joy and Good Cheer: **Staying Active**

With the days getting shorter and your task lists getting longer, it's easy to put daily exercise low on the priority scale. The many benefits of physical activity become abundantly clear during the high calorie, high stress holiday season. Maintaining your exercise program during the holiday season not only burns extra calories, but feel-good chemicals of serotonin, dopamine and endorphins that are released during exercise provide you with a host of mental and emotional health benefits. Staying active during the holidays will help ensure a season of balance, joy and cheer.

Put exercise higher on your holiday priority list and experience the many rewards:

1. **Exercise improves your mood.**

Even short bouts of physical activity can have a positive effect on your mood. With the days getting shorter, exercise can help you maintain the brightness you feel in the summer.

2. **Physical activity reduces stress and feelings of anxiety.**

Exercise helps decrease hormones that build up during stress. It also gives you a mini-vacation from your to-do list.

3. **Exercise improves sleep quality.**

The same hormones that build up during stress get in the way of sound sleep. Being active will lessen those hormones and invite a better night sleep. Sure beats counting sheep!

4. **Exercise improves self-esteem and self-confidence.**

The sense of accomplishment that comes from being active will carry over into other areas of your life, enhancing your sense of self-esteem and self-confidence. Exercise helps you feel stronger, stand straighter and improve your posture—all which helps you feel better about yourself.

5. **Activity gives you a sense of peace.**

A simple walk can bring an instant sense of peace, calm and self-awareness. Or time alone on a treadmill or exercise machine can help you organize your thoughts and clear your mind.

Highmark Resources

Highmark offers HealthMedia[®] tailored web-based weight management program, Balance[™], is an excellent resource for getting and staying active this holiday season.

When you are ready to begin, it only takes a few minutes to get started. Here's how:

1. Go to Highmark's website at www.highmark.com. Choose your member site.
2. Complete the login process, entering your user name and password.
3. Choose the "Your Health" tab and then click on "Improve Your Health."
4. Choose the program in which you wish to enroll

The material contained in this Newsletter has been selected to provide general background and useful information regarding maintaining weight or avoiding the cumulative effects of gradual weight gain during the holiday season. It is not intended to be complete or tailored to your specific needs. You should discuss the information, facts and tips with your doctor. You should not engage in physical activity, which may have injury and health risks associated with it, until you confirm with your doctor that it is appropriate for you. If you experience any pain or discomfort, call your doctor. The material contained in this Newsletter is not designed to replace either medical advice or medical treatment.

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It's All About Balance

To get the greatest benefit from physical activity, it's important to create a balanced workout routine. This includes the following three components:

Burn calories by participating in **DAILY AEROBIC ACTIVITY.**

Try walking, running, cycling or spinning, rowing, swimming, dancing, aerobics or anything else that gets your heart pumping. For most people, walking is the best form of cardiovascular activity. It's easy, free and convenient—you can walk almost anywhere.

For healthy adults, the American College of Sports Medicine and the American Heart Association recommend:

1. Moderate-intensity activity for a minimum of 30 minutes per day, five days each week, or
2. Vigorous-intensity activity for a minimum of 20 minutes per day on three days each week, or
3. Activity above the recommended level provides even more health benefits.

Participate in **STRENGTH TRAINING** to maintain or build muscle and burn calories 24/7.

Strength training improves and enhances muscle. It will also help you maintain and not gain this holiday season. Muscle burns more calories than fat, so the more muscle you have, the more calories you burn.

Here are some FAQ's about strength training:

- *How often should I strength train?*
Try strength training two times per week. Select eight to 10 different strength-training exercises and include exercises for your back, abdominals, chest, shoulders, arms and legs.
- *How many repetitions should I do?*
Most people gain the most benefit from doing one set of eight to 12 repetitions of each exercise. You can always do more, but at least do something. Don't set unrealistic goals and then run out of time to accomplish them.
- *Do I need special equipment?*
You don't need sophisticated equipment to strength train. Use inexpensive hand weights, soup cans, a resistance band or your own body weight to get the benefits of strength training.

Don't forget to stretch to improve flexibility and prevent injury.

Stretching is an important, but often overlooked, part of a balanced exercise routine. Benefits include improved flexibility, increased range of motion, improved circulation, stress relief and injury prevention. Strive to stretch at least three times per week or each time you exercise. Begin each exercise session with a warm-up that targets your major muscle groups. Relax and breathe with each stretch and hold each stretch for a minimum of 30 seconds.

Read more about the benefits of exercise and download instructional brochures at the American College of Sports Medicine Web site at www.acsm.org.

A Special Note About Exercise: If you are not already physically active or have an existing health condition, consult your physician before beginning a structured physical activity program.

Additional Resources

Log onto the American College of Sports Medicine's website at www.acsm.org for ideas, motivation and support to help you be more active.

Take Time to Reflect

How were you successful in achieving the goal(s) you set for yourself last week? What barriers did you experience? How did you overcome those barriers? Take a few moments to reflect on your experience, so far, and what you could continue to do or change to enhance your success.

YOU CAN Fit in Physical Activity

With busy work schedules, family obligations and the added pressures of the season, fitting in time for physical activity may seem impossible. Creative thinking and planning will help you get and stay active throughout the holiday season and beyond. Don't think about what you CAN'T do, think about what you CAN do:

You can break it up.

- Take three or more ten minute walks each day.
- Workout for 20 minutes in the morning and take a 10-minute walk after dinner.

You can plan for it.

Starting now, set aside specific days and times for mini-workouts. Schedule them in your calendar or Blackberry and commit.

You can sneak it in.

- Keep a set of weights or a resistance band next to your television, bed or desk.

- Instead of sitting on the couch while watching television, take advantage of the time to do some stretches and strength training exercises.
- Stretch for five minutes before bed or upon awakening.
- Do bicep curls before getting in the shower each morning.

You can make it accessible.

- Keep your walking or running shoes easily within reach, so that tired feet don't provide an excuse to ride rather than walk. With a pair of comfortable shoes, you can turn any place into a gym.

You can mix it up.

- Vary the time and intensity of your workouts. Walk briskly for 30 minutes twice per week and ride an exercise bike at a higher intensity for 20 minutes on two other days.

You can do less.

- Doing a shorter workout is better than no workout at all.
- Adapt your normal fitness routine to take less time during the holiday season rather than giving up on it altogether.

You can make it a social affair.

- Get moving with your spouse, family, friends or co-workers. Teaming up helps you stay motivated and accountable.
- Get the kids involved and go sled riding, ice skating or participate in other winter sports.

Can you think of other creative ways YOU CAN fit physical activity into your day? List them here and refer to them anytime you feel discouraged or need a boost of motivation.

My Goal for Balance, Joy and Good Cheer

Set one goal that you can work on during the upcoming week to assist you in maintaining your weight, as well as being physically active during the busy holiday season. Using the space provided, define your goal(s) for this coming week.

Don't forget to self monitor...

Check your weight to see if you are achieving your goal of maintaining, not gaining.

Date: _____

Weight: _____

THANKSGIVING LEFTOVERS LIGHTENED UP

Thanksgiving Salad

Number of Servings: 4

- 1-1/2 pounds sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch chunks
- 2 navel oranges
- 3 cups sliced Romaine lettuce, cut crosswise into 1-inch-wide strips)
- 6 ounces roast turkey breast, torn into 1-inch pieces
- 1/2 cup thinly sliced green onions
- 3 tablespoons frozen cranberry juice concentrate, thawed
- 3 tablespoons frozen orange juice concentrate, thawed
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 tablespoons coarsely chopped pecans, toasted (about 1/2 ounce)
- 2 tablespoons dried cranberries or dark raisins

1. Place sweet potatoes in a medium saucepan and add cold water to cover by 1 inch. Cover and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, until sweet potato is fork-tender, 10 to 12 minutes. Drain in a colander and cool briefly under gently running cold water.
2. Meanwhile, with a serrated knife, remove peel and white pith from oranges. Cut each orange in half lengthwise, place halves flat on a cutting board and cut crosswise into 1/4-inch-thick slices.
3. Spread lettuce on a platter. Top with sweet potatoes, turkey and orange slices. Sprinkle with green onions.
4. In small bowl or cup, whisk together cranberry juice concentrate, orange juice concentrate, vinegar, oil and pepper. Pour over salad and sprinkle salad with pecans and dried cranberries.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving: 393 calories, 7g total fat, 8g dietary fiber, 18g protein, 67g carbohydrate, 52mg sodium

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Turkey Sandwiches with Spicy Cranberry-Pineapple Relish

Number of Servings: 4

- 1-1/2 cups fresh or frozen cranberries
- 1/4 cup frozen pineapple juice concentrate
- 2 tablespoons chopped walnuts
- 1 tablespoon prepared horseradish
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 8 slices (1 ounce each) whole-grain bread, toasted
- 1 medium red onion, very thinly sliced
- 1/2 pound roast turkey breast, sliced

1. In a heavy-bottomed medium saucepan, combine the cranberries and pineapple juice concentrate. Cook over low heat, stirring occasionally, until the cranberries begin to pop, 10 to 15 minutes.
2. Remove the cranberry-pineapple mixture from the heat and let cool to room temperature. Stir in the walnuts and horseradish.
3. Spread the mustard on one side of each slice of bread. Top 4 slices of the bread with the red onion, turkey and cranberry relish. Top with the remaining slices of bread.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving: 322 calories, 5g total fat, 6g dietary fiber, 26g protein, 42g carbohydrate, 500mg sodium

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THANKSGIVING LEFTOVERS LIGHTENED UP

Turkey Crostini

Number of Servings: 8

1/2 pound roasted turkey, pulled and shredded with a fork
1/2 cup finely chopped sun-dried tomatoes
3 tablespoons reduced-fat mayonnaise
2 tablespoons fresh chopped parsley (or 1 tablespoon dried)
1 tablespoon fresh chopped chives (or 1 teaspoon dried)
1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
1 tablespoon spicy mustard
3 tablespoons goat cheese or Chèvre cheese
1 loaf French baguette bread, cut into about 24 (1/2-inch) slices

1. In a medium bowl, combine shredded turkey, sun-dried tomatoes, mayonnaise, parsley, chives, lime juice, mustard and goat cheese. Blend well.
2. Spread 1 to 2 tablespoons turkey mixture on each slice of bread.
3. Place on broiler pan lined with foil. Broil 4 inches from heat source for 5 to 6 minutes or until lightly browned.

Nutrition Facts Per 3-Piece Serving: 119 calories, 2g total fat, 1g dietary fiber, 7g protein, 18g carbohydrate, 543mg sodium

Cranberry-Orange Salad Dressing

Number of Servings: 12

1/2 cup whole berry cranberry sauce
1 cup fat-free red wine vinaigrette dressing
1 tablespoon grated orange rind

1. Combine all ingredients and whisk to combine.
2. Spoon over mixed greens, mandarin orange slices and slivered almonds. Store leftovers in a bottle or cruet.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving: 37 calories, 0g total fat, 9g Carbohydrate, 149mg sodium