

HEALTH MATTERS®

Your Health
Your Life
Live Well



The Middlesex Community College Health and Wellness Newsletter

MARCH 2007



Top 10 Reasons To Drink Plenty of Water

You know that drinking water is good for you, but did you know that every system in your body depends on water? Here are 10 reasons why drinking water is good for you and why you should make drinking 8-10 glasses of water part of your daily routine.

- 1 Get healthy skin.** Drinking water moisturizes your skin from the inside out. Water is essential to maintaining elasticity and suppleness and helps prevent dryness.
- 2 Lose weight.** Increased water consumption can help you control weight by preventing you from confusing hunger with thirst. Water will also keep your body systems, including metabolism and digestion, working properly and give you the energy (and hydration) necessary for exercise.
- 3 Flush toxins.** By helping to flush toxins, appropriate water intake lessens the burden on your kidneys and liver.
- 4 Reduce your risk of a heart attack.** Studies in 20,000 healthy men and women show that people who drink more than five glasses of water a day were less likely to die from a heart attack or heart disease than those who drank fewer than two glasses a day.
- 5 Cushion and lube your joints and muscles.** Water makes up a large part of the fluid that lubricates and cushions your joints and muscles. Drinking water before, during, and after exercise can also help reduce muscle cramping and premature fatigue.
- 6 Stay regular.** Water helps prevent constipation by adding fluid to the colon and bulk to stools, making bowel movements softer and easier to pass.
- 7 Stay hydrated, get energized, and be alert.** On average, most adults lose about 10 cups of fluid a day through sweating, exhaling, urinating, and bowel movements. Even minor dehydration can cause impaired concentration, headaches, irritability and fatigue.
- 8 Regulate your body temperature.** Perspiration is your body's natural mechanism to control body temperature. And to sweat, you need plenty of water.
- 9 Reduce your risk of disease and infection.** Water can help prevent kidney stones and reduce your chances of getting bladder, kidney, and urinary tract infections.
- 10 Get well.** The traditional prescription to "drink plenty of fluids" when you're sick still holds strong. Water can help control a fever, replace lost fluids, and thin out mucus.

(<http://www.purwater.com/yourwater/essential.shtml>)



THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF EXERCISE

Studies show that regular physical activity:

- ✓ Improves your chances of living longer
- ✓ Improves quality of life
- ✓ Reduces the risk of heart disease
- ✓ Helps lower high blood pressure and high cholesterol
- ✓ Helps protect you from developing certain cancers
- ✓ Helps prevent or control type 2 diabetes (adult-onset diabetes)
- ✓ Reduces the risk of arthritis and alleviates associated symptoms
- ✓ Helps prevent osteoporosis (gradual loss of bone mass/strength)
- ✓ Improves mobility and strength in later life
- ✓ Alleviates symptoms of depression and anxiety
- ✓ Benefits weight reduction and weight management



Stress Reduction Tips

- **Take time off from stress.** Relax, lay back, "veg out", laugh, eat something healthy.
- **Exercise.** Take a walk, do a few stretching exercises, lift weights.
- **Take life one day at a time.**
- **Maintain a sense of humor.** Learn to laugh at yourself.
- **Become better organized.** Prioritize your activities.
- **Enjoy your food and eating environment.** Don't eat on the run—schedule meals with friends to take a break from work.
- **BE FLEXIBLE.** Accept imperfection - everyone makes mistakes.
- **Close your eyes and RELAX.** Picture yourself in a surrounding which represents peacefulness to you.
- **Be a friend to yourself and others—SMILE!**
- **Stay with your emotions.** Don't avoid, repress, or negate them.

10 Important Tips For Healthier Eating



1. Eat a variety of nutrient-rich foods.

You need more than 40 different nutrients for good health, and no single food supplies them all. Your daily food selection should include bread and other whole-grain products; fruits; vegetables; dairy products; and meat, poultry, fish and other protein foods.



2. Eat lots of whole grains, fruits and vegetables.

Surveys show most Americans don't eat enough of these foods. Do you eat 6-11 servings from the bread, rice, cereal and pasta group, 3 of which should be whole grains? Do you eat 2-4 servings of fruit and 3-5 servings of vegetables? If you don't enjoy some of these at first, give them another chance. Look through cookbooks for tasty ways to prepare unfamiliar foods.



3. Maintain a healthy weight.

The weight that's right for you depends on many factors including your sex, height, age and heredity. Excess body fat increases your chances for high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, some types of cancer and other illnesses. But being too thin can increase your risk for osteoporosis, menstrual irregularities and other health problems. If you're constantly losing and regaining weight, a registered dietitian can help you develop sensible eating habits for successful weight management. Regular exercise is also important to maintaining a healthy weight.



4. Eat moderate portions.

If you keep portion sizes reasonable, it's easier to eat the foods you want and stay healthy. Did you know the recommended serving of cooked meat is 3 ounces, similar in size to a deck of playing cards? A medium piece of fruit is 1 serving and a cup of pasta equals 2 servings. A pint of ice cream contains 4 servings.



5. Eat regular meals.

Skipping meals can lead to out-of-control hunger, often resulting in overeating. When you're very hungry, it's also tempting to forget about good nutrition. Snacking between meals can help curb hunger, but don't eat so much that your snack becomes an entire meal.



6. Reduce, don't eliminate certain foods.



Most people eat for pleasure as well as nutrition. If your favorite foods are high in fat, salt or sugar, the key is moderating how much of these foods you eat and how often you eat them. Identify major sources of these ingredients in your diet and make changes, if necessary. Adults who eat high-fat meats or whole-milk dairy products at every meal are probably eating too much fat. Use the Nutrition Facts panel on the food label to help balance your choices. Choosing skim or low-fat dairy products and lean cuts of meat such as flank steak and beef round can reduce fat intake significantly. If you love fried chicken, however, you don't have to give it up. Just eat it less often. When dining out, share it with a friend, ask for a take-home bag or a smaller portion.



7. Balance your food choices over time.

Not every food has to be "perfect." When eating a food high in fat, salt or sugar, select other foods that are low in these ingredients. If you miss out on any food group one day, make up for it the next. Your food choices over several days should fit together into a healthy pattern.



8. Know your diet pitfalls.

To improve your eating habits, you first have to know what's wrong with them. Write down everything you eat for three days. Then check your list according to the rest of these tips. Do you add a lot of butter, creamy sauces or salad dressings? Rather than eliminating these foods, just cut back your portions. Are you getting enough fruits and vegetables? If not, you may be missing out on vital nutrients.

9. Make changes gradually.

Just as there are no "superfoods" or easy answers to a healthy diet, don't expect to totally revamp your eating habits overnight. Changing too much, too fast can get in the way of success. Begin to remedy excesses or deficiencies with modest changes that can add up to positive, lifelong eating habits. For instance, if you don't like the taste of skim milk, try low-fat. Eventually you may find you like skim, too.



10. Remember, foods are not good or bad.

Select foods based on your total eating patterns, not whether any individual food is "good" or "bad." Don't feel guilty if you love foods such as apple pie, potato chips, candy bars or ice cream. Eat them in moderation, and choose other foods to provide the balance and variety that are vital to good health.





THE FORGOTTEN BENEFITS OF

SLEEP



Sleep. It refreshes us like nothing else. It can be occasionally elusive, almost always comforting, and definitely essential to our survival. And although we spend 33% of our lives asleep, we barely give it a moment's notice.... We all have too much to do, so take time out and recharge yourself by getting a good night's sleep. The quality and quantity of your sleep can make all the difference in how productive you'll be the next day.

HERE ARE TEN TIPS TO HELP YOU GET THE SLEEP YOU NEED AND DESERVE.

- Zzzz...** **Maintain** a regular bed and wake time schedule, including weekends.
- Zzzz...** **Establish** a regular, relaxing bedtime routine such as soaking in a hot bath and then reading a book or listening to soothing music.
- Zzzz...** **Create** a sleep-conducive environment that is dark, quiet, comfortable and cool.
- Zzzz...** **Sleep** on a comfortable mattress and pillows.
- Zzzz...** **Use your bedroom** only for sleep and sex. It is best to take work materials, computers and televisions out of the sleeping environment.
- Zzzz...** **Finish eating** at least two to three hours before your regular bedtime.
- Zzzz...** **Exercise** regularly. It is best to complete your workout a few hours before bedtime.
- Zzzz...** **Avoid nicotine** (e.g., cigarettes, tobacco products). Used close to bedtime, it can lead to poor sleep.
- Zzzz...** **Avoid caffeine** (e.g., coffee, tea, soft drinks, chocolate) close to bedtime. It can keep you awake.
- Zzzz...** **Avoid alcohol** close to bedtime. It can lead to disrupted sleep later in the night.



Walking: Earth's Easiest Exercise

(Borrowed from October Issue of TopHealth Wellness Newsletter)

Walking can add years to your life and life to your years. And it couldn't be easier. You don't need to join a health club, wear special equipment, or go into training to reap the rewards.

The Conditioner: Walking conditions your heart and lungs and improves your bodies ability to use oxygen efficiently. **Fact:** In one study, women who walked briskly (3-4 mph) at least 3 hours per week cut their risk of heart attack and stroke by more than half.

The Protector: Walking helps beat other health problem too. It reduces your risk of some forms of cancer and osteoporosis. It fights the battle of the bulge, reducing body fat and building muscle. Walking can even help people with diabetes reduce or eliminate their need for medication.

The Joint Saver: Walking can burn about as many calories per mile as jogging does. But it delivers less of a jolt, so it's much easier on your joints and muscles.

The De-Stressor: Walking is easy on your mind too, since it lessens stress and lightens depression. Beginning walkers usually report that they feel and sleep better, and that their mental outlook improves.

The WINNER! Best of all, walking has the lowest drop-out rate of any form of exercise. So you're more likely to stick with it and get all these benefits and more, like better digestion, improved regularity, and lower blood pressure.

There's nothing to it: Just put on a sturdy comfortable pair of shoes and go. **Smart moves:** Walk to the store for the Sunday paper; park a few blocks from school or work or get off the bus or train one stop early and walk from there; use the stairs instead of elevators or escalators; on bad weather days walk in a mall or on a gym treadmill.

FastFact!



Did you know that quitting smoking can help lower your risk of death by heart attack by over 50% or more within 5 years?!

FastFact!



You already know that Vitamin C is an immune booster, but did you know that 1 cup of green bell pepper contains more vitamin C than is found in a medium-size orange?!

HEALTH AND FITNESS AT MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE



Middlesex Community College offers a wide variety of fitness opportunities for students, faculty, and staff alike. Whether you are extremely physically active, or quite the contrary, MCC has an option that will certainly meet your needs for exercise and physical activity.

"MARCH INTO MAY" EMPLOYEE WALKING PROGRAM

"March Into May" is an MCC Employee Walking Program - a new initiative being launched this semester. Staff and faculty participants will be given a pedometer, which they will use to record the amount of steps they take in an average day. Over the course of several weeks, participants will be encouraged to increase the number of steps they take, thereby increasing their overall physical activity level. Prizes and incentives will be provided to participants who show greatest effort and improvement. This program will begin on the Lowell Campus on February 28th, and will be on the Bedford Campus by early to mid April.



BEDFORD FITNESS CENTER



Imagine a fitness center that was FREE to students, staff, and faculty. Imagine a fitness center open from 8 am–6 pm Monday through Thursday (8-4 on Fridays), with locker rooms, showers, a friendly and competent staff, and a warm and welcoming environment. Well imagine no longer! The Bedford Fitness Center is ALL THAT, and more. Whether you are a beginner or expert in the world of exercise, this facility can accommodate you. With free weights, weight machines, cardiovascular equipment, and a new punching bag, the Bedford Fitness Center gives you every good reason to come get in shape! Stop by for a tour - it' worth a good look!

UMASS LOWELL RECREATION CENTER

If you want access to vast quantities of state-of-the-art fitness equipment, spacious facilities, indoor track, access to basketball and racquetball courts, dance studios, pool and ping-pong tables, and showers and saunas, all housed in a multi-million dollar facility right in your back yard, then the UMASS Lowell Recreation Center is perfect for you. MCC students enrolled in 10 credits or more have the option of purchasing a membership to this facility for \$10/month. Rest assured - this is unquestionably the best price you will EVER see for a facility of this quality. Visit their website (<http://www.uml.edu/campusrecreation/>) for a virtual tour, or stop by their facility for a REAL tour (free). See what all the buzz is about! Staff and faculty are also eligible for memberships - call the Bedford Fitness Center for more information.



YOGA AND AEROBICS



YOGA is offered every Monday and Thursday from 12:30-1:30 on the Lowell Campus (Howe Dance Studio). YOGA is known for improving circulation, increasing relaxation, and maintaining muscle tone. The class is free, is open to all skill levels, and includes students, staff, and faculty. All equipment is provided—just show up in comfortable clothes for an hour of healthy relaxation. It's never to late to join the class, and there is no commitment. Stop by to check it out - you'll probably want to stay!

Aerobics is offered every Tuesday and Thursday from 4:15-5:15 on the Bedford Campus (North Academic G11). Aerobics is great for enhancing your cardiovascular performance, improving physical strength and endurance, facilitating weight loss, and improving overall sense of health and wellness. The class is free, is open to all skill levels, and includes students, staff, and faculty. This class offers a degree of intensity and challenge to the workout—guaranteed to push you physically, but within the bounds of your own abilities. It's never to late to join the class, and there is no commitment.

WEIGHT TRAINING I CLASS

The Weight Training I class is a 1-credit introductory course designed to familiarize participants with designing a personalized workout routine, maintaining a workout schedule and regimen, and gaining confidence with using a variety of fitness-related machines and equipment found in a typical fitness facility. This course is offered each semester (Spring and Fall), and is taught in the Bedford Fitness Center. Enrolled students work closely with a certified personal trainer in developing a workout routine, and then complete 20 workout sessions on their own throughout the semester.



SPORTS CLUBS (INTRAMURAL AND NON-INTRAMURAL)

Did you know that MCC has a Soccer Club? A Hockey Club? A Dance Club? A Bowling Club? A Basketball Club? Not only do we have clubs, but these clubs are **ACTIVE**. The Soccer, Hockey, and Basketball Clubs all participate in the UMASS Lowell Intramurals program, playing games against UMASS Lowell teams. The Bowling Club meets every Sunday to bowl, and is organizing a large tournament this semester. The Dance Club meets every Friday evening, offering a variety of free dance lessons from 6-8 on the Lowell Campus. All of these clubs are always looking for new members - no experience needed!



RECREATIONAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Fitness and Recreation Department offers a variety of fitness-related activities and events throughout the year, on both the Lowell and Bedford Campuses. Recreational activities offered this academic year have included: downhill skiing, Frisbee day, a Lasertag trip, an X-Box tournament, a dart competition, a charity walk, and a bowling trip. Watch the Activities Calendar for upcoming events and activities sponsored by the Fitness and Recreation Department.

BEANTOWN BOOTCAMP

The Beantown Bootcamp is a pilot 9-session fitness program that began on February 26th. A professional and highly skilled personal trainer leads participants through a challenging physical regimen. This program was open to only 20 students, staff, and faculty participants, but due to the overwhelming response, we are likely to offer this again next semester.

QUESTIONS? For more information on ANY of these terrific opportunities, please contact Jonathan in the Bedford Fitness Center. He can be found at (781) 280-3785, or at crockettj@middlesex.mass.edu.