

SHAPE UP with Pilates



Can a workout program that's promoted by the rich, the famous and the very fit work for the average exerciser? The Pilates fitness method, which focuses on improving total strength, flexibility and balance, has been growing in popularity for several years. It has now joined the mainstream of exercise methods widely offered

and supported by men and women of all shapes, ages and fitness levels.

Pilates (puh-LAH-teez) primarily involves strengthening the core muscles of the abdomen, buttocks, hips and back by controlling various movements through precise form and gradual progression. Concentration and breathing are emphasized.

Workouts may consist of simple floor-work classes or special resistance machines. Instructors typically offer a series of 60-minute sessions working one-on-one or with small groups.

Classes can be customized for exercisers who are older, pregnant, overweight, athletes and the super fit as well as those rehabilitating from injuries. You can also learn or refine the techniques from video or online instruction in your home.

Ultimate benefits include a leaner physique, increased energy and stamina, and a stronger back. Though Pilates can build core strength, additional cardiovascular (aerobic) workouts are still recommended by fitness experts.

Get Ready for FLU Season

Health Canada recommends an annual flu vaccination (injection) for everybody 6 months and older, including healthy people. Those most vulnerable to influenza and related complications include: people age 65-plus; people with lung diseases and other chronic medical conditions; smokers; and health care or childcare workers.

Best time to get vaccinated is in October or November, to build immunity before the height of winter viruses. But if you forget, get it in December or later – flu season usually lasts from November to April in Canada.

MORE INFO ▶ Health Canada, What Can You Do?:
www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dc-ma/influenza/index-eng.php

HEALTH notes

■ **Which cutting board is safer?** (a) plastic, (b) wooden or (c) either. The answer is c – as long as you scrub it really well with soap and warm water after exposing it to raw animal-based foods (meats, poultry, seafood, eggs). Plastic does have an advantage: you can clean it in the dishwasher. You could: Assign one board for raw animal foods and one for everything else, such as breads and produce. You should: Replace boards that develop deep grooves or cracks that can trap troublesome bacteria.

■ **Reckless ways to waste gas:** racing, hard or rapid acceleration, frequent braking and tailgating – all kinds of aggressive driving – can significantly lower gas mileage and your ability to react safely. **The more you press that gas pedal, the more gas you're pumping into the engine.** *Tips:* Press lightly on the gas pedal, lay off the pedal sooner rather than later when coming to a stop, and drive more smoothly. Sensible driving is safer for you and others, and it may save more than gas money.

■ **Best heartburn relief? LOSE WEIGHT.** According to the ongoing Nurses' Health Study, moderate weight gain doubled the risk of persistent heartburn and GERD (gastroesophageal reflux disease). A body mass index (BMI) of 30-plus nearly tripled the risk; the lower the BMI, the lower the risk. Losing just 10% of your excess weight can make a difference. *See your provider if heartburn persists.*

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

IBS and STRESS: What's the connection?

Stress can aggravate the symptoms of IBS, but the problem is not “all in your head.”

Until recently, mental stress was blamed for the symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). Some doctors and patients alike believed the symptoms – primarily abdominal pain or discomfort and diarrhea or constipation (or fluctuations between the two) – resulted from emotional distress and tension.

Today we know that stress *does not cause* IBS. Recent studies point to these possible causes: excess levels of the brain hormone serotonin, hypersensitive nerve endings, or heredity.

However, stress *can worsen* IBS and stress management can help control the symptoms. Research indicates that severe stress can increase symptoms in at least 50% of patients.

The stress-control methods that often help ease IBS symptoms include:

Physical activity. Exercise helps release muscle tension and regulate colon contractions. With your provider's okay, gradually progress to at least 30 minutes of moderate activity 5 days a week.

Relaxation therapy. Learn a technique you can easily do regularly to calm your nerves. They don't need to be complicated – simple choices include meditation, deep breathing, or progressive muscle relaxation.

Counselling. Work with a cognitive-behavioural therapist to improve emotional coping skills and change self-defeating thoughts.

Hypnosis. Harness the power of suggestion – with self-hypnosis or guidance from a trained therapist – to reduce symptoms of IBS.

Learn to recognize the events in your life that tend to produce stress in you; then begin to find relief before the emotions or demands get the best of you.

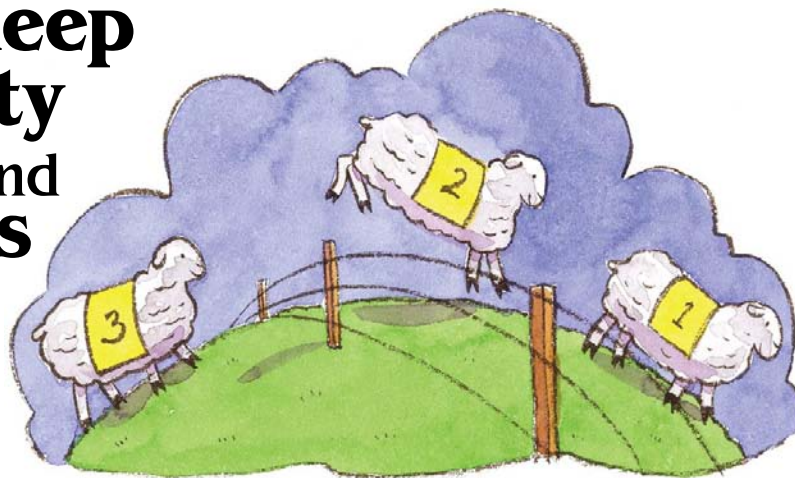
Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP

MORE INFO ▶ Irritable Bowel Syndrome Association: www.ibsassociation.ca

Make Sleep a Priority For YOU and YOUR KIDS

According to sleep experts, many of us – including children and adolescents – don't get the sleep we need for good health.

Adequate sleep is just as important to kids' health and well-being as diet and exercise, according to experts at the Pediatric Behavioral Sleep Medicine Program at Children's National Medical Center in Washington, DC. Kids who



don't sleep well are more likely to have behavioural problems and learning difficulties and a risk of drowsy driving crashes, especially common among young drivers.

According to sleep polls, many parents are unaware that their children don't get adequate sleep. If your kids seem sleep-deprived, maybe it's time for the talk – tell them how vital sleep is to their health and happiness. Then show them by setting a good example.

Better Sleep – All in the Family

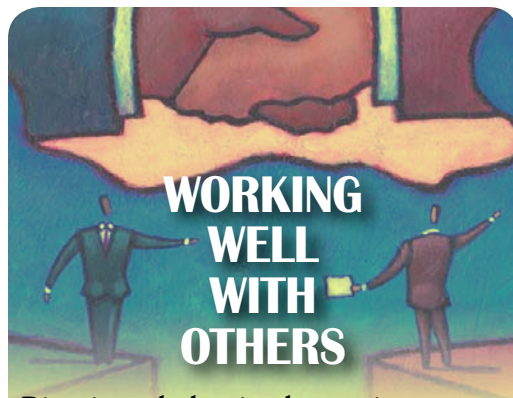
- Each persona needs to set a routine bedtime – go to bed at the same time, 7 days a week.
- Near bedtime, avoid mental stimulation such as TV viewing, computer work, or video games.
- Cut the caffeine at least 6 hours before bedtime.
- Avoid heavy meals and alcohol close to bedtime.
- Don't over schedule after-school and evening activities if they're cutting into sleep time.
- Tune down any bothersome noise at bedtime.
- Keep TVs and computers out of bedrooms.

If self-care measures aren't helping, consult your health care provider – *because sound sleep is essential to sound health.*

Sleep Needs – While everyone has slightly different needs, sleep experts agree we function best when we follow these numbers:

AGE GROUP	HOURS/SLEEP NEEDED DAILY
Preschoolers (ages 3-5)	11-13
Children (ages 5-12)	10-11
Teens (ages 13-19)	8.5-9.25
Adults	7-9

MORE INFO ▶ Canadian Sleep Society: www.css.to



Diversity and adversity characterize most every workplace. They're what make working interesting and challenging, and sometimes stressful. The key is building strong work relationships – it may take time and sensitivity, but it's worth the effort when you consider how much time you are together on the job. Start with these habits:

Be reliable. Others depend on you to be on time and do your share.

Be responsible. Own your mistakes and don't be too big to apologize.

Be polite. Set a good example.

Communicate right. It reduces confusion and mistakes.

Listen actively. It's the key to learning.

Stay flexible. Change is a constant.

Maintain a positive attitude. It's contagious.

Respect each other. Keep the team strong.

Most important: Always show kindness and encouragement. You'll never regret being patient, especially at times when others are trying to cope with added stress.



CAUTION

Protect Yourself – Out & About

Most people don't think twice about being careful when they're out at night.

But do you have a tendency to let your guard down during daylight hours, or close to home? Day or night, remember these simple precautions to increase your safety.

ON FOOT

- ▶ Know your surroundings
- ▶ Stay watchful of potential trouble – don't let your cell phone or ear buds distract you.
- ▶ Carry your cell phone (charged) for use in an emergency.
- ▶ Avoid shortcuts through alleys as well as empty parks, parking garages and lots – stay in well-lit, populated areas.
- ▶ If you see a threatening situation, enter a nearby store or other public place.
- ▶ Keep your distance from people who try to approach you, even if they are just asking for directions or the time.
- ▶ Avoid carrying a lot of bags and stuff – it slows you down and makes you appear vulnerable.
Tip: Wear shoes and clothing that allow easy movement.

Fixing Broken Hearts

Heat disease remains the number one killer of men and women in Canada. Behind the statistics we often forget the human cost – lost loved ones and diminished quality of life.

Fortunately, heart patients can mend with cardiac rehabilitation. By focusing on permanent lifestyle changes, cardiac rehab greatly increases the chances of recovering from a heart attack or surgery.

Rehab lasts about 6-12 months and may occur in a hospital, rehab center or in your home. Your rehab team may include a heart specialist, nurse, dietitian, mental health practitioner and physical or occupational therapists.

Your program is tailored to you – for example, the rehab team may work with you to:

- Control high blood pressure, unhealthy cholesterol and diabetes.

- ▶ If a driver follows you or tries to get your attention, walk away in the opposite direction.

ON THE ROAD

- ▶ Keep your car locked at all times, everywhere.
- ▶ Do not leave any possessions visible in your car – even coins. *Tip:* Thieves love to scout store parking lots.
- ▶ Avoid approaching your car if you see someone looking at it or trying to break in.
- ▶ Get your car keys out before you leave a building.
- ▶ If you are followed, drive to a public place, such as a gas station, and honk the horn.

ON PUBLIC TRANSIT

- ▶ Stay aware – avoid sleeping. If you read or use electronic devices, stay watchful of activity around you.
- ▶ Keep all your possessions on your lap where you can see them.
- ▶ Follow a transit schedule that reduces wait times at stops.
- ▶ Tell the driver if you feel threatened.

Best advice: If someone demands your money or other property, don't resist. Never assume they are pretending to have a weapon if they don't display one. If you are attacked, yell or scream to get attention.



- Lose excess weight.
- Help you quit tobacco if you use it.
- Develop a safe exercise routine.
- Adopt a heart-smart eating plan.
- Manage depression and other emotions.

Committing to changes taught in rehab can help you enjoy a healthier, active life.

Note: The Canadian Cardiac Rehabilitation Foundation reports that only 15% or fewer of heart attack patients enroll in cardiac rehabilitation, despite its many benefits. If you have a heart condition and your provider doesn't mention cardiac rehab, ask.

Q: MRI for breast cancer screening?

A: Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) tests can spot some breast cancers better than mammography. Clinical trials are assessing MRI effectiveness as a supplement to mammograms in women at high risk for the disease.

There are drawbacks with MRI as a general screening tool. While MRI finds many cancers, it will not find them all, and it often detects benign tumours, leading to unnecessary follow-up procedures.

While no test screens perfectly, mammography remains the best method of detecting breast cancer early. But a case-by-case decision makes the most sense, so talk to your provider about the best option for you.

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Are you due for a mammogram? Guidelines for women vary depending on age. Check with your provider or provincial screening program. Your breast cancer risk increases as you age and if your mother, sister, or daughter has had the disease. To learn more about breast cancer visit the Breast Cancer Society of Canada at www.bccsc.ca.

Q: Does gender affect blood pressure?

A: Gender can be a factor in blood pressure. Among young or middle-aged adults, men are more likely than women to develop high blood pressure (hypertension). But after age 55, women have a higher rate than men.

Women who use the birth-control pill may have increased risk for elevated blood pressure (BP), especially if they smoke. A small percentage of women develop a blood pressure disorder (pre-eclampsia) in the last few months of pregnancy.

Five million Canadians have high blood pressure – 22% of adults. The Heart and Stroke Foundation reports that 42% of that number don't know they have hypertension and just 16% treat and control the condition.

Man or woman, consult your provider if you have risk factors for hypertension – including obesity, family history and being African Canadian – and have not had your BP checked recently.

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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FAST FOOD with a SIDE OF HEALTH

North Americans have had a love affair with eating on the go since the 1920s, or about the time the first fast food diner opened with 5¢ hamburgers. By the 1930s, California introduced drive-in joints so customers could order food – mostly burgers, fries and ice cream – without even leaving their cars. Even faster today, drive-through dining offers everything from breakfast bagels to steak tacos and tossed salads.

If you often rely on fast food, keep your health in mind – you don't have to order the

biggest, fattest items on the menu. You can learn what's in your fast food: Visit your favourite restaurant websites, which often provide nutrition information about specific meal choices.

You'll find an increasing number of healthier picks popping up on today's menus. Bottom line: Armed with knowledge, you can have fast food your way, not a steady diet of foods that raise your daily fat, calorie and sodium intake – and your risk of weight gain.



2 STEPS to HEALTHY FAST FOOD

Avoid these high-fat/high-calorie options:

- breakfast sandwiches and meats
- deep-fried fish and chicken (strips, nuggets and sandwiches)
- milkshakes
- cheese and special sauces
- full-fat dressings, mayo, tartar sauce, butter, sour cream

Choose nutritious options:

- grilled chicken or fish sandwich (without sauce or mayo)
- veggie sandwiches on whole-wheat bread or tortilla (without sauce and cheese)
- salad with fat-free dressing
- fruit or fruit and yoghurt
- baked potato (with veggies only)
- fat-free or low-fat milk
- salsa (instead of sour cream or cheese)

Best advice: Avoid GIANT servings. For example, a triple-patty burger packs about 700 calories and 41 grams of fat; a regular burger has 250-300 calories. A 32-ounce/.946 litres regular soft drink has 400 calories!

Quick! TEST YOUR FAST FOOD IQ

MATCH THE FOODS TO THEIR NUTRITIONAL CONTENT.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Large biscuit | a. 8g fat, 750mg sodium, 330 calories |
| 2. Grilled steak soft taco | b. 27g fat, 510mg sodium, 1160 calories |
| 3. Veggie wrap with sauce | c. 16g fat, 660mg sodium, 270 calories |
| 4. Caesar salad with grilled chicken, regular Caesar dressing, butter garlic croutons | d. 52g fat, 1,680mg sodium, 800 calories |
| 5. Chocolate shake, 32 oz./946 litres | e. 25g fat, 1,530mg sodium, 470 calories |

Answers: 1. d; 2. c; 3. a; 4. e; 5. b.



Recipe of the Month

Turkey Burgers

Make this burger your favourite for taste and nutrition.

Patty ingredients:

- 1 pound/454g ground turkey breast
- 1 egg
- ¼ cup/59ml ketchup
- ¼ tsp/1ml salt
- ¼ tsp/1ml pepper
- ¼ cup/27g whole-wheat bread crumbs

Other ingredients:

- 4 small whole-wheat hamburger buns*
 - 1 cup/70g sliced mushrooms
 - 4 small lettuce leaves
 - 4 tomato slices
- Optional: pickles, ketchup, mustard

*Shop for buns with about 120 calories and at least 3g fibre each

- 1 Combine patty ingredients and shape into 4 patties, ½ inch/1.27cm thick.
- 2 Broil or grill burgers about 6 inches/15cm from heat, 3-4 minutes per side.
- 3 Meanwhile, add mushrooms to non-stick skillet heated and lightly sprayed with cooking oil; cook over medium heat until tender, about 3 minutes.
- 4 Split buns in half; toast lightly if you like.
- 5 Place patties on bottom halves of buns; add equal portions of mushrooms to each, then stack remaining ingredients.

Nutrition Facts

Makes 4 sandwiches.

Amount Per Sandwich	Calories	305
	Protein	37g
	Total Fat	4g
	Total Carb	35g
	Fibre	6g
	Sodium	697mg

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