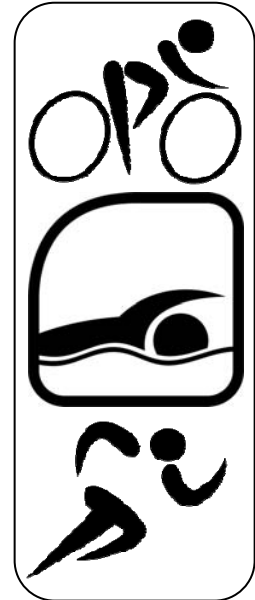


Crazy for Cross-Training

Stuck in a routine? Almost every fitness program can be improved with the addition of cross-training. Cross-training is the practice of incorporating different types of activities into your cardiovascular routine. For example, if you normally run or walk for exercise; try including a session of cycling or a group fitness class in your weekly routine. Cross-training has many benefits.

One advantage of changing up your exercise routine with cross-training is that it keeps your program from being just that—routine. Your body adapts to physical challenges and becomes efficient at what you ask of it. Cross-training provides a variety of movement that keeps your body engaged and your workout fresh. It also helps alleviate the boredom that can come by doing the same thing all the time.

Cross-training can have some important health benefits. People, especially women, who exclusively cycle or swim for exercise are at risk for osteoporosis because these activities are not weight-bearing exercise. The



continued on p. 3



Statins for All?

A study published recently in the *New England Journal of Medicine* may have far-reaching implications in the treatment for heart disease and stroke.

Current practice is to prescribe statins to patients with elevated cholesterol, a well-established risk factor for cardiovascular disease. Another possible indicator of cardiovascular disease is C-reactive protein. Elevated levels of CRP are associated with the presence of inflammation in the body and may indicate elevated risk for heart disease.

In this study, almost 18,000 men and women with normal cholesterol but elevated levels of C-reactive protein (CRP) were given the statin Crestor or a placebo. The

study was planned for a five-year period, but was stopped after almost two years due to the dramatic results: the statin group experienced 50% fewer heart attacks, stroke and angioplasty or bypass surgery than the placebo group. The statin group also had 20% fewer deaths overall.

What does this mean for the population at large? Does this mean that millions more Americans will be prescribed statins at huge cost and a boon to the drug companies? The authors of the study stress that lifestyle changes are and should continue to be the first choice treatment for high cholesterol or elevated CRP. They claim that statins are for those people whose cholesterol does not drop even with dietary and fitness changes. However, many physicians and patients will certainly skip the lifestyle modifications and

continued on p. 2

continued from p. 1

make the jump immediately to statins, which must be taken daily for life. There are major issues to consider here. First, although statins have been shown to be safe for most people long-term, a small percentage of patients will develop serious side effects of muscle damage or kidney problems. This study also indicated an increased incidence of diabetes among the statin users. The percentage of people affected may be small, but if huge numbers of people take these drugs, then a small percentage will become a large number of people who develop serious side effects.

Another concern is the impartiality of the study. The study was funded by AstraZeneca, the manufacturer of Crestor. Also, one of the lead investigators of the study holds a patent on the use of CRP to evaluate the risk of cardiovascular disease. The fact that the sponsoring company and lead investigator stand to gain financially from the findings must be considered when evaluating the results.



The study was stopped after less than two years into a five-year protocol, so there is no long-term safety data for those with elevated CRP but normal cholesterol levels who take statins. Another issue is that currently patients are not routinely tested for CRP levels.

The medical community is evaluating the data and will eventually make recommendations regarding patient standards for prescribing statins and for administering tests for CRP levels. In the meantime, consult your physician about your medical history before requesting a CRP test and a prescription for a statin. Lifestyle changes remain the first treatment of choice. Talk to your healthcare provider and health and fitness professional about how to be successful at making lifestyle changes to avoid the need for any medication. The only risk is that you will feel and look better, and you might have to buy a new wardrobe.

*Nancy Tashman, Perfectly Fit Corporate Services, Inc.
Source: Belluck, Pam. "Cholesterol-Fighting Drugs Show Wider Benefit." New York Times. 10 November 2008. < www.newyorktimes.com>.*

Exercise of the Month

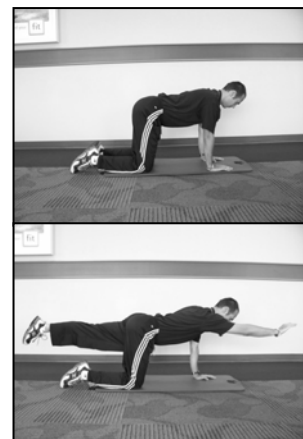
Kneeling Superman/Opposite Arm-Opposite Leg Raise

Benefits: Core, Stability, and Balance

Preparation : Begin on all fours, in neutral spine, with abdominals drawn in, chin tucked with face looking down at the floor, not up.

Movement : Keep abdominals engaged, hips stabilized and shoulders square to the floor. Slowly raise one arm, palm facing down and extend the opposite leg, toe pointed away. Keep both arm and leg straight and lengthened away from the body while maintaining body height level. Hold for five seconds and return both arm and leg slowly to the ground, maintaining alignment and repeat alternating sides for 8-10 repetitions on each side.

Amy Berry, Perfectly Fit Corporate Services, Inc.



continued from p.1

bicycle or the water supports your body weight. Incorporating a day of running or aerobic dance puts you on your feet and “loads” or stresses your bones to help maintain bone density. Resistance training also loads your bones to help maintain bone density, but you need exercises on your feet to help maintain the bone density of your spine. Why not try something different for your cardio that is weight-bearing (like running, walking or aerobics) once or twice a week?

On the flip side, running can put lots of wear and stress on the joints. Incorporating a day of swimming or cycling can give your joints a rest while your muscles and heart get a fresh challenge. Elliptical and rowing machines are also non-impact and can provide an excellent workout while being kinder to your joints. Playing a sport is another way to cross-train. While tennis or basketball are not considered aerobic exercise—too much starting, stopping and sprinting, they can be fun, social and a great way to burn calories.



If you plan to try some cross-training, evaluate your current routine for what might be lacking before deciding what type of additional activity to incorporate. Think about whether or not the new activity should be weight-bearing, what you would enjoy, what would be convenient and how you would fit the new activity into your schedule. If you decide to try swimming, it may take some time to build your swimming skills to

sustain a 30-minute workout. Whatever new challenge you pick, be sure to pace yourself and aim for at least 30 minutes of activity. You may need to invest in some new equipment like running shoes or goggles. The payoff to your body, though, will be priceless!



Nancy Tashman, Perfectly Fit Corporate Services, Inc.



**The only exercise some people get is
jumping to conclusions, running down
their friends, side-stepping
responsibility, and pushing their luck!**

~Author Unknown

R

Low-Fat Chocolate Raspberry Cake

E

Preparation time: 15 minutes
Cooking time: 45 minutes

C

Ingredients

1 1/2 cups all purpose flour
1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 1/4 cups sugar
1/2 cup unsweetened applesauce
1 egg or 2 egg whites
1 cup nonfat milk or water
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1/4 cup seedless raspberry jam
Confectioners' sugar
1 pint fresh raspberries

I

P

E

Directions

Pre-heat the oven to 350°F. Lightly spray an 8 x 8 x 2-inch baking pan with nonstick cooking spray. Dust with cocoa powder.

In a medium bowl whisk together the flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. In a large bowl, using an electric mixer on low speed, beat together the sugar, applesauce, and egg until smooth. Beat in the milk and vanilla until blended. Add the flour mixture and beat until blended.

Turn the batter into the pan. Bake 40-45 minutes, or until a pick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool in the pan on a wire rack for 10 minutes.

Turn out onto the rack or a serving plate to cool completely. To serve, melt the jam in a saucepan over low heat. Brush over the top of the cooled cake. Top with raspberries and dust with confectioners' sugar.

Serves 9

Nutrition Facts: Calories 256, fat 2 g, saturated fat 1 g, cholesterol 24 mg, sodium 268 mg, carbohydrates 58 g, fiber 4 g, protein 5 g.



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