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HEALTH
& *wellness*

For Members of
United Service
Association
For Health Care
SPRING 2011

**Michael
Douglas** *in*

His Most Powerful
Performance

plus
It's Food, Fast ...
but Not Fast Food

and Tech Toys Can
Geek Out
Your Workout

USA
United Service Association
For Health Care

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[cover story]
His Most Powerful
Performance

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Cover photo: Michael Douglas poses for a photo on April 24, 2009 in Los Angeles. Douglas was honored with 37th AFI Life Achievement Award which aired on TV Land, July 19th, 2009 at 9:00p.m. ET/PT.

(Casey Rodgers/AP Images for TV Land)

Nearly Half of Americans Face Serious Heart Risks

HERE'S A STARTLING STATISTIC: NEARLY HALF OF ALL AMERICANS HAVE AT LEAST ONE OF THREE MAJOR RISK FACTORS FOR HEART DISEASE. HERE ARE THREE EASY STEPS THAT CAN HELP YOU PROTECT YOUR HEART.



→ THINK YOU'RE NOT AT RISK FOR HEART DISEASE?

According to new data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there's a 50-50 chance you're wrong. Almost half of all Americans have at least one of three conditions that raise heart risks: diabetes, high cholesterol, or high blood pressure. But take heart: There are three steps you can follow to improve your health and protect your cardiovascular system.

Step 1: Know Your Risks

For the new report, CDC researchers tested Americans all over the country. They found more than 15 percent had one or more of these conditions without even knowing it.

To avoid this fate, talk with your doctor. He or she should check your cholesterol at least every five years and your blood pressure every two years, and test you for diabetes every three years after age 45. You might need more frequent screenings based on your personal risk factors.

In general, you have:

- **High cholesterol** if your total number is 240 mg/dL or higher
- **High blood pressure** if your reading is 140/90 mmHg or higher
- **Diabetes** if your fasting glucose level is 126 mg/dL or higher

Step 2: Get in Control

Your doctor can help you set goals that are right for you. In general, for the best heart health, aim for:

- LDL, or "bad" cholesterol, of less than 100 mg/dL
- HDL, or "good" cholesterol, of 60 mg/dL or higher
- Triglycerides less than 150 mg/dL
- Blood pressure of 120/80 or lower

Step 3: Practice Prevention

To achieve your targets and stay healthy:

- **Keep your weight in check.** Extra pounds weigh down your good cholesterol and boost the

bad. If you're heavy, losing 7 to 10 percent of your body weight prevents complications from high blood pressure, and losing 5 to 7 percent reduces your risk for diabetes.

- **Exercise.** Aim for 30 minutes per day, five times a week. Not only will it help you maintain a healthy weight, it can lower LDL, raise HDL, reduce blood pressure, and ward off diabetes on its own.
- **Eat a healthy diet.** Cut sodium and saturated and trans fats. Consume more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat and fat-free dairy foods, and lean meats. •

Want to get your own personal life plan for cardiovascular health? Check out Life's Simple 7, a free cardiac risk assessment offered by the American Heart Association. Just visit www.heart.org to get started.

We value your membership and are here to assist you should you need us. Please contact us at 800-872-1187.

Tech Toys Can “Geek Out” Your Workout

TECHNOLOGY IS CHANGING THE WAY WE WORK OUT. FROM FITNESS-FOCUSED VIDEO GAMES TO EXERCISE-ORIENTED WEBSITES, YOU CAN “GEEK OUT” AND WORK OUT AT THE SAME TIME.

→ VIDEO FITNESS GAMES ARE GROWING IN POPULARITY.

And these games, which require some physical interaction, may provide real benefits. The National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) recently reported that fitness-focused video games may improve core (abdominal and back muscle) strength, increase range of motion, and motivate people to exercise.

Gaming Consoles Aren't the Only Option

Fitness-focused gaming options are one way to increase your family's physical activity. There are lots of other ways technology can help jumpstart your exercise program and keep you motivated. Many are available for free and don't require expensive equipment.

Interactive Internet Sites

- Plot a new walking route and log your exercise times and distances with the American Heart Association's My Start! online tool. Go to www.startchallengeetool.com.
- Find out how many calories you've burned through exercise with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's MyPyramid Tracker. Visit www.mypyramidtracker.gov to get started.
- *For kids:* Schedule a weekly exercise plan and track your progress at www.bam.gov. This Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) “Body and Mind” website provides information and interactive tools designed just for kids.

Fitness Video Programs

Use your television for more than mindless (and motionless) viewing. See if your local library has fitness-focused videos or DVDs you can check out. Mix up your workout and get a different one each week. Or search your local television listings for exercise programming. If a program doesn't air at a convenient time for you, record it and schedule a time to play it back.

Portable Device Programs

Use your cell phone or personal digital assistant (PDA) calendar function to schedule and remind you of exercise “appointments.” Or search the Internet for fitness-focused programs to download onto your phone, PDA, or MP3 player. Some track exercise goals or provide exercise tips. Others offer music and guidance to motivate you through your workouts.

Pay Attention to Exercise Guidelines

Although high-tech exercise resources can be fun, it's still up to you to get moving. Remember:

- The CDC recommends that adults, including older adults, get at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity exercise, such as brisk walking, on five or more days of the week. Or aim for at least 20 minutes of vigorous exercise (such as running) three days a week.
- Children and teens should aim for 60 minutes on most days.
- Try incorporating strength training exercises into your routine twice a week.

Talk with your doctor before exercising if you have a chronic condition such as diabetes or high blood pressure. Whether you're active or inactive, you should also talk with your doctor if you have any symptoms that could be due to a chronic disease—for example, dizziness or chest pain. •

For more, check out the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's section on physical activity at www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity.



Ten Ways to Slash Stroke Risk

HERE IS A “STROKE” OF GOOD LUCK: THERE ARE WAYS YOU CAN REDUCE YOUR RISK FOR THIS DISABLING, LIFE-THREATENING CONDITION.

→ **STROKES KILL MORE THAN 150,000 AMERICANS EACH YEAR AND LEAVE MANY MORE DISABLED.**

They happen when the brain doesn't get enough blood, either because an artery bursts or a clot blocked the blood flow.

Some risk factors, such as getting older and being male, can't be changed. But a new study in *The Lancet* found 10 that can—and together, they account for 90 percent of stroke risk. Here are the details:

1. High blood pressure. Stroke risk is four to six times higher in those with hypertension. One in three adults has high blood pressure. Get yours checked regularly.

2. Diabetes. High blood sugar damages blood vessels in the brain. People with diabetes have triple the stroke risk of those without the disease. Work with your doctor to manage your blood glucose.

3. Heart disease. A misshapen heart or irregular heartbeat could contribute to stroke. To treat your condition, your doctor might recommend surgery or medication.

4. Abnormal cholesterol. High levels of LDL or “bad” cholesterol and low levels of HDL or “good” cholesterol clog arteries. Have yours checked at least once every five years.

5. Waist-to-hip ratio. Being heavy contributes to all four of the previous risk factors. To maintain a healthy weight, balance the number of calories you eat with your physical activity level.

6. Unhealthy diet. Study participants who ate a Mediterranean diet—rich in fish and fruits—had the lowest stroke risk. Load up on fruits, veggies, whole grains, and lean proteins.

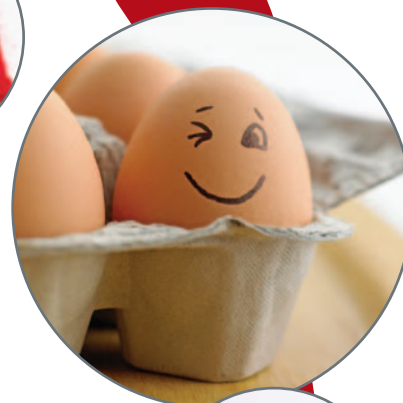
7. Not exercising. Working out keeps your blood flowing and your heart strong. Aim for 30 minutes a day, five days a week. Even 10 minutes offers health benefits.

8. Smoking. All forms of tobacco can cause blockages in the artery leading to the brain. Nicotine also raises blood pressure and thickens the blood. Kick the habit and your stroke risk drops immediately.

9. Drinking alcohol. Binge drinking thins blood, increasing bleeding risk. Limit alcohol to one drink per day for women or two for men.

10. Stress. Constant psychological pressure may damage artery walls. To calm down, try positive self-talk. Don't think, “I can't do this.” Tell yourself, “I'll do the best I can.” •

For up-to-the-minute news, myths and facts on stroke, prevention information, and more, visit the online home of the National Stroke Association at www.stroke.org.



Great Gains in Grains

YOUR MARKET LIKELY SELLS VARIETIES ONCE FOUND ONLY IN HEALTH-FOOD STORES. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF WHOLE GRAINS THAT SPAN THE WHOLE GLOBE.

→ **THE STORY OF WHOLE GRAINS DOESN'T END WITH WHEAT. IT'S A TALE THAT CAN TAKE YOU AROUND THE world and back in time.**

The Incas ate quinoa (keen-wa) in South America, while the Aztecs enjoyed amaranth. Travel further in your journey and sample sorghum, a grain from Africa, or millet, from Asia. Taste buckwheat, which isn't wheat at all and can perk up a gluten-free diet.

What if you're not adventurous, but you're following U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) dietary guidelines that recommend adults have three or more servings of

whole-grain foods and 21 to 38 grams of dietary fiber each day? You can eat oatmeal for breakfast, whole wheat bread at lunch, brown rice stir-fry for dinner, and popcorn for a snack. (Yes, popcorn counts as a whole grain.)

Supermarkets now carry whole-grain products you could once find only in health-food stores. Look for cereals, breads, crackers, flours, pasta, and bags and boxes of grain (usually in the rice aisle). Some are single ingredients, others are blends. They're mixable and interchangeable.

A lot of packaging bears this U.S. Food and Drug Administration-approved statement: "Diets rich in whole-grain foods and other plant foods and low in total fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease and some cancers."

You may also see the black and gold stamp of the Whole Grains Council. The Whole Grain Stamp identifies foods that contain at least half a serving (8 g) of whole grains, are made from 100 percent whole-grain ingredients, or contain at least one full serving (16 g) of whole grains.

Can you eat too much whole grain? If you consume too many calories—even from whole grains—you risk gaining weight. However, there's a probable benefit in choosing whole grains for all your grain servings, not just the half recommended by the USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans and MyPyramid. •

Wacky about whole grains? Discover recipes, blogs, and other tidbits at the Whole Grains Council website. Just direct your Web browser to www.wholegrainscouncil.org.

SUPERMARKETS NOW CARRY
whole-grain products YOU
COULD ONCE FIND ONLY IN
HEALTH-FOOD STORES.

stuffed cabbage soup



Ingredients.

- ½ lb. ground round
- 1 tsp. olive oil
- 1-½ cups sliced onion
- 3 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2 cups shredded cabbage
- 28-oz. can petite diced tomatoes, low sodium
- 14-oz. can low-sodium beef broth
- 3 cups water
- 2 tbsp. parsley
- 3 cups cooked brown rice or other grain, such as barley or millet

- 1 Brown meat in soup pot. Drain fat if necessary.
- 2 Add olive oil, then onions and garlic and sauté briefly.
- 3 Add shredded cabbage and continue stirring.
- 4 Add tomatoes, beef broth, and water. Bring to boil.
- 5 Reduce heat and let cook for about 10 minutes on simmer. Sprinkle in parsley.

To serve, put half a cup of cooked brown rice or other grain of your choice (barley, millet, quinoa) into a large bowl. Ladle stuffed cabbage soup over grain. Serve.

Makes six servings. Each serving contains about 232 calories, 6 g fat (2 g saturated fat, no trans fat, 22 mg cholesterol), 369 mg sodium, 34 g carbohydrate, 4 g dietary fiber, 7 g sugars, and 12 g protein.

Kernels of Wisdom

LABEL LOGIC. Look carefully at the label. It should list “whole” as part of the first ingredient if you truly want a whole-grain product. If it’s the second or third ingredient, the pasta, bread, or cereal is a mix of refined and whole grains. Buzzwords like “natural,” “multigrain,” or “seven-grain” don’t necessarily mean it’s whole grain.

COLOR CONFUSION. Bread made from refined flour can be brown because it contains molasses to give a wholesome appearance. White bread or pasta can be whole grain if its main ingredient is whole white wheat. Confused? White wheat, milder than red wheat, is being grown more often in the U.S.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE. Cooking directions generally call for twice as much water as grain. More water generally means softer grains. Less water can produce fluffier grains. A cup of raw quinoa will swell to 4 cups cooked. A cup of raw barley will make 3 cups cooked. Even “exotic” grains often offer cooking directions and websites for recipes. No time? Use instant brown rice.

GRAIN AS A CANVAS. You can be an artist if you stir-fry vegetables with a bit of meat and serve it with a whole grain. Brown rice, barley, quinoa, and millet will take on the flavors of what you put on them. Some grains add color—quinoa comes in red as well as beige. Teff, a tiny grain, is dark brown.

HOT OR NOT? Whole grains can be served hot in stir-fries and side dishes or cold in salads.

FREEZE, PLEASE. It’s a great idea to cook more grains than you need. Leftovers will keep in the refrigerator for three to five days and can be frozen. Use 1-cup containers or measure 1 cup portions and freeze in plastic bags.

Keep Children Safe This Summer

SUMMERTIME MEANS FUN—BUT UNFORTUNATELY, THE SUMMER MONTHS ALSO CARRY SOME HEALTH HAZARDS FOR CHILDREN. HELP KEEP YOUR LITTLE ONES SAFE WITH THESE TIPS.



→ **MANY OF SUMMERTIME'S PLEASURES CARRY HEALTH RISKS FOR CHILDREN.** You can help them avoid these hazards by taking simple precautions.

Bad Bugs

- Serious reactions to bee and wasp stings, indicated by hives, dizziness or shortness of breath, require immediate medical attention. Call **911**.
- Mosquitoes can carry West Nile virus, which can be fatal. To stay safe:
 - Consider keeping children indoors during dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active.
 - Apply an insect repellent that contains no more than 30 percent DEET.
- Ticks can cause Lyme disease and other infections. To protect your kids:
 - Have them wear pants and long-sleeve shirts when walking in the woods or tall grass.
 - Check their hair and skin for ticks after they spend time outdoors.

Bikes and Boards

- Make sure they wear approved helmets that fit properly. Helmets reduce the risk for brain injury by up to 88 percent. When skateboarding, make sure they also wear helmets and wrist, knee and elbow guards.
- Make sure their bicycles are the proper size and adjust the seats to the right height.
- Be sure they know and follow the rules of the road.

Flip-flops

- Flip-flops lack arch support and shock absorption, and they do not protect feet. Your child should not wear them for long periods of time, for sports or yard work, or for walking long distances.
- Flip-flops are appropriate when walking around a public pool, beach, or locker room. Walking barefoot can expose feet to plantar warts and athlete's foot.

Garden Chemical Exposure

- Follow product-label directions and warnings when using pesticides, herbicides, and insecticides. Clear the area of children, toys and pets before using the products. Don't apply chemicals on windy days.
- Seek immediate medical care if children come in contact with yard chemicals.

Heat Hazards

- Have children avoid strenuous activities during the hottest part of the day, between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Be sure they drink plenty of water, especially before, during, and after doing strenuous activities. They should avoid caffeinated sodas, which can cause dehydration.

Sunburn

- Limit children's time in the sun, particularly between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when the sun's rays are at their peak.
- Apply sunscreen on children, even on cloudy days. Use a sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 that protects against UVA and UVB rays.
- Have children wear sunglasses and wide-brimmed hats.

Water Safety

- Teach children to swim. If you can't teach them, enroll any child 4 and older in swimming lessons.
- Install a fence with a locking gate if you have a home pool.
- Watch children at all times when they are in or near bodies of water.
- Let them dive only in areas designated for diving, where the depth of the water is known. •

A full-page photograph of Michael Douglas and Catherine Zeta-Jones. Michael Douglas, on the left, is an older man with grey hair, wearing a dark blue suit, white shirt, and a patterned tie. He is smiling. Catherine Zeta-Jones, on the right, has dark hair styled up and is wearing a black, strapless, draped dress with large, ornate purple earrings and a bracelet. She is also smiling. The background is dark and out of focus.

His Most **POWERFUL** Performance:

Hollywood Star **Michael Douglas** Defeats Throat Cancer

IT MAY HAVE BEEN THE MOST REWARDING PERFORMANCE OF MICHAEL DOUGLAS' ENTIRE ACTING CAREER. AND IT left his audience of more than 103,000 adoring fans cheering, clapping, and whistling in their seats. [read more →](#)



Actors Catherine Zeta-Jones and Michael Douglas tour Dallas Cowboys Stadium before the Green Bay Packers took on the Pittsburgh Steelers in Super Bowl XLV on Sunday, Feb. 6, 2011, in Arlington, Texas. The Packers defeated the Steelers 31-25.

→ **WHEN FAMED HOLLYWOOD ACTOR MICHAEL DOUGLAS STEPPED OUT** onto the field at Super Bowl XLV and waved to the vast throng gathered at Cowboys Stadium, thousands of ardent moviegoers offered him a roaring welcome, and for good reason.

Only a few weeks before the football extravaganza in Dallas last February 6th, the two-time Oscar winner and iconic cinema superstar had announced that his Stage IV throat cancer was in remission—after a five-month regimen of chemotherapy and radiation that apparently saved his life.

For the 66-year-old Douglas—a worldwide phenom of the Silver Screen whose classic performances in such global blockbusters as *Wall Street* (1987) and *Basic Instinct* (1992) have been watched by hundreds of millions of moviegoers—the

battle against oropharyngeal (throat) cancer had been long and exhausting.

During his five months of cancer treatment (after being diagnosed with the life-threatening disease last August), Douglas endured many hours of invasive radiation and chemical therapy that left him violently nauseous at times, while also shutting down his salivary glands and leaving him unable to eat solid foods for a while.

As the treatment for the late-stage, two-inch tumor that had invaded the base of the actor's tongue proceeded week by week, he lost more than 30 pounds and often felt so weak that it was a struggle just to climb out of his chair.

Normally a retiring and extremely private figure, Douglas decided early on that he didn't want to "try and hide the fact"

that he'd come down with the dreaded "C" disease. As he told late-night talk-show host David Letterman in a segment that was watched by millions: "My throat had been bothering me for a while, and I went through a litany of doctors and tests, but they didn't find anything.

"Then they did a biopsy at the end of the summer, and it was Stage IV."

Responding to the unhappy news (in Stage IV, the most advanced stage, the cancer has spread to nearby lymph nodes), Letterman wished the world-famous actor good luck with his approaching treatment. Then, acting on impulse, he suddenly asked: "Can I do something for you?"

Douglas didn't hesitate. "Give me a hug!"

(Letterman did, and the audience went wild.)

A few days later, the Hollywood legend would explain exactly why he had chosen to "go public" with his scary medical condition, telling another interviewer: "When you're a celebrity, nothing remains secret for very long. If it [going public] helps bring attention, then that is a major upside to this whole thing.

"Millions of families are going through the same thing that my family and I are now going through. If I can bring any relief or encouragement to those suffering, that's the good news!"

An Idyllic Existence . . . And Then Cancer

As the oldest son of one of the world's best-known actors (Kirk Douglas, an American cinema icon of the 1940s and 1950s), Michael Douglas knew early on that he wanted to make his own

“Millions of families are going through the same thing that my family and I are now going through. If I can bring **any relief** or **encouragement** to those suffering, that’s the good news!”

run at a career in Tinseltown. Interestingly enough, however, he faced strong opposition from his own father — a thoroughly disillusioned acting legend who had vowed that his own kids would never become the prisoners of Hollywood.

The younger Douglas persisted, however. After graduating from the University of California, Santa Barbara in 1966, he immediately set sail for Los Angeles and the “dream factories” that his superstar dad had warned against.

But his journey toward movie stardom got off to a slow start . . . with the release of several eminently forgettable yawners (such as *Hail, Hero!* and *Summertime*). For a while, it looked as if Douglas’ acting career might never leave the runway. Nonetheless, the fiercely determined tyro refused to give up . . . and he finally got a break in 1972, when veteran actor Karl Malden took him on as a regular on Malden’s hugely popular TV series, *The Streets of San Francisco*.

Douglas was an almost instant hit on the show, and went on to build a growing reputation for the kind of laid-back, coolly understated acting that would

define his entire career. By 1975, in fact, he was already so well established that he was able to produce a major hit (*One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*, which won a Best Actor Oscar for the youthful Jack Nicholson). The movie also landed Douglas an Academy Award for Best Picture — a huge breakthrough that he would later ride to his own successful career as a film actor.

During the next three decades, the indefatigable Douglas would become one of the most powerful figures in all of showbiz, as he starred in one blockbuster screen vehicle after the next. By 1987, when he nailed down a Best Actor Oscar for *Wall Street* (“Greed is good. Greed is right. Greed works!”), he would be at the top of his game . . . as an actor who often played selfish, abusively villainous men destined to be brutally punished by the women they exploited (in *Fatal Attraction* [1987] and *Basic Instinct* [1992], for example).

Happily married to charismatic cinema and Broadway star Catherine Zeta-Jones and routinely described as one of the world’s wealthiest actors, Douglas appeared to be enjoying an idyllic existence . . . when the news broke last summer that he

had come down with late-stage throat cancer and was in danger of succumbing to it.

Once again, however, he managed to overcome some dauntingly high odds, en route to overcoming the disease and emerging by last January with a “cancer free” diagnosis from his team of oncology specialists. And although he still faces a significant risk of recurrence within the next three years or so, he says he’s now “feeling pretty healthy” and riding a wave of euphoria

that has recently become the center of his life.

Ask Michael Douglas what it’s like to survive a brush with deadly throat cancer, and he doesn’t hesitate. “I’m just so happy to be out of the house and enjoying myself for a change,” he said on the night when he wowed the fans at Super Bowl XLV. “I mean, to be here tonight and cancer-free is pretty special.

“On a night like this, you smell the roses!” •



(AP Photo/Mark Mainz)

Actor Michael Douglas poses for a portrait while promoting “*Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps*” at the 63rd Cannes Film Festival on Thursday, May 13, 2010.

Exercise Away the Blues

IT'S COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT REGULAR EXERCISE IS GOOD FOR YOUR BODY—BUT DID YOU KNOW THAT IT'S GOOD FOR YOUR MIND, TOO? READ ON FOR SOME OF THE MENTAL BENEFITS OF EXERCISE.

→ **EXPERTS NOW KNOW THAT MOVING YOUR BODY IS ONE OF THE BEST MOOD BOOSTERS AROUND.** Take this quiz to see how much you know about the mental benefits of exercise.

Multiple Benefits of Exercise

Please circle one answer for each question.

1. Evidence shows that exercise can produce the following results:

- A. Prevent depressive symptoms
- B. Treat major depression
- C. Both A and B

2. How much do you need to exercise to improve your mood?

- A. Work out daily for 16 weeks.
- B. Make time for one session.
- C. Exercise twice a week for 10 weeks.

3. Which is the best exercise for depression?

- A. Aerobic activity
- B. Strength training
- C. Both A and B

Check Your Answers

1. C. Some evidence shows that exercise may prevent depressive symptoms in high-risk adults. Two studies found that exercise improved mood in college students who suffered from some depressive symptoms. Exercise also contributes to high self-esteem and positive feelings of well-being.

Research also suggests that, by itself, regular exercise can treat major depression as well as therapy and antidepressant medicine. Antidepressants brought a quicker response among patients. But exercise alone provided similar improvements with fewer side effects.

Exactly how exercise helps depression is unclear. Exercise may release mood-enhancing chemicals in the body, such as serotonin or beta-endorphins. Or exercise may improve other factors, such as boredom or sleep problems, which contribute to depression.

2. B. Even a single, 25-minute workout can improve your mood, the research says. But for the most mood-boosting benefits, you'll need to exercise on a regular basis.

3. C. Aerobic exercise and strength training appear to offer similar benefits for treating and preventing depression. For example, one study of 40 depressed women found that running and weight lifting were almost equally effective for treating depression.

If you want to start an exercise program, follow these guidelines:

- Choose an activity you like, such as walking, jogging, or cycling.
- Start exercising slowly, even just a few minutes at a time if you are out of shape. Over time, build up to at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise most days of the week. •

Depression is a treatable illness. Symptoms like persistent sadness, changes in appetite, or continual thoughts of suicide may be possible signs of depression. To learn more, visit the online home of the National Institute of Mental Health at www.nimh.nih.gov. Under the Mental Health Information heading, click on Depression.



Take Control of Stress Today

YOU'VE FELT IT BEFORE IN HIGH-PRESSURE SITUATIONS. YOUR HEAD HURTS. YOUR HEART BEATS FASTER. YOUR STOMACH CHURNS. YOU KNOW YOU'VE HIT YOUR LIMIT. TOO MUCH STRESS CAN HURT YOUR HEALTH—BUT DON'T STRESS OVER THAT. HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO REDUCE IT.

→ **WHEN YOU'RE STRESSED**, attempting to tackle everything at once may only cause you more stress. Here are some tips to manage your stress.

Make a List

Each day, write down everything that you need to accomplish. Put a line through each item as you complete it.

Sleep on it

When you're tired, you're more susceptible to stress. But 20 percent of Americans get less than six hours of sleep per night, according to the National Sleep Foundation. If a racing mind often keeps you awake, writing down any to-do items or thoughts can take the worries out of your head and lead to better rest.

Get Active

Exercising on a regular basis can do more than just help you get in shape. It can help you cope with stress and release tension and energy. Physical activity also releases mood-boosting chemicals in your brain. Experts recommend 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week. Try taking a brisk walk on your lunch break.

Breathe Easy

When you're feeling stressed, your breathing speeds up and becomes shallow. As a result, your heart rate and blood pressure increase, and you may feel anxious or have a headache. By taking a few minutes to breathe properly, you can short-circuit this reaction and lessen your anxiety. Here's how:

- Lying or sitting comfortably, place one hand on your belly and the other hand on your chest.
- Inhale through your nose and feel the hand on your belly rise. The hand on your chest should barely move.



- Exhale slowly, feeling the hand on your belly descend.

Tense to Relax

Stress is often written all over your body: Your brow is furrowed, your lips are pursed, your shoulders are up by your ears, and your back is hunched. Using a method called progressive relaxation helps release tension throughout your body, inducing a more relaxed state. You can practice this technique by tensing one muscle group at a time for ten seconds and then letting it go. If you're pressed for time, try this quickie version that tackles all muscle groups at once:

- Sit or lie comfortably.
- Clench both fists, bend both arms, tense your biceps and legs, close your eyes, scrunch your face, bring your shoulders up to your ears and tense your stomach muscles.
- Hold for about five seconds and then release, letting go of the tension and allowing all of your muscles to go limp.

As you do this, keep the idea of relaxation in the forefront of your mind.

Rely on Friends

Make sure you have a strong support system of friends and family who can help you when you're stressed. Talking with someone you trust about your stress can help you work through it. Without the support of others, stress can be even worse.

Remember, you can't tackle everything at once. If you take things one task at a time, one day at a time, you'll see progress and feel less stress. •

We all get stressed from time to time, but too much stress has been linked to health concerns. For example, upsetting emotions are the trigger most often reported by people who have had a heart attack. Also, stress can make it harder to follow a healthy lifestyle. For stress reduction tips and more, head over to the American Institute of Stress at www.stress.org.

Marketing Executive Beau Wood Saved \$2,000— Thanks To USA+

AS THE HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL AND “GUNG-HO” MARKETING DIRECTOR OF A THRIVING HOME SERVICES COMPANY BASED IN TEXAS —HOMETEC, LOCATED NEAR DALLAS —BEAU WOOD KNOWS A LOT ABOUT ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES AND MARKETING STUDIES.

→ **BUT THE SAVVY, 35-YEAR-OLD WOOD WASN'T TRAINED AS A PROFESSIONAL PLUMBER**, and he couldn't fix a broken central air-conditioning system to save his life.

That's why his heart sank on that “terrible afternoon” a few months ago—when he hit the switch on the central air in his home and nothing happened.

Startled, Beau hit the switch again. After a few seconds, the system's aging condenser made a sad, groaning sound, and then gave up the ghost.

Suddenly, the dollar-smart marketing exec was looking at a major home repair that would not be covered by his homeowner's insurance.

And when he saw the bill for installing the new condenser, his vision swam for a moment. “They wanted \$2,100 for the new part,” says Wood, who's spent the past four years managing home services marketing operations all across Texas and the Southwest.

“When I looked at the bill, I found myself short of breath,” he says. “But then I remembered I had a package of USA+ home benefits—the same kind of package we help make available to folks through HomeTec.”

Thanks to his USA+ membership, the budget-wise marketer paid only \$75 for a repair that would otherwise have cost him \$2,100.

“THAT'S A **win-win situation** FOR **everybody** WHO BELONGS TO THE **USA+ family...**”

Ask Beau Wood—a former standout football player for the Tarleton State University Texans—how he feels about the \$2,000 he saved, and this veteran business executive won't hesitate.

“I don't think you need a PhD in economics to understand the benefits of USA+ membership,” says the gifted athlete, who still spends several afternoons a week lifting weights.

“Whether you're hoping to save money on automobile repairs, medical bills, drug prescriptions, or air-conditioner repair, a USA+ membership can provide you with the kinds of benefits that will protect your family budget.

“That's a win-win situation for everybody who belongs to the USA+ family,” says Wood, who also likes the way USA+ earmarks \$2 per month to the USA+ Foundation, which has donated nearly \$7 million to charity. “USA+ is providing millions of dollars in research funds for health,” says the Lone Star State marketing guru. “When you think about that, along with the savings, you realize that



Beau Wood (pictured above) saved more than \$2,000 in repairs to his home's air-conditioning system, thanks to his United Service Association For Health Care (USA+) membership.

there are many good reasons to sign up. That's why I joined. And believe me, when I saw that air-conditioning bill, I was glad to know I was a USA+ member!” •

Want to share your experience as a USA+ member? We'd love to hear from you. Please give us a call at 1-800-872-1187.

It's Food, Fast—But Not Fast Food

HAVING A LITTLE TROUBLE FINDING THE TIME TO PLAN TASTY, NUTRITIOUS MEALS? IT'S ALL ABOUT FINDING A SYSTEM THAT WORKS FOR YOU. HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO HELP YOU DO JUST THAT.

→ **AT THE END OF A LONG DAY**, coming up with a recipe, stopping at the market, and making a meal can be more than you can manage. Instead, plan ahead for what you want to cook and need to buy. The time you spend on planning will save you prep time and shopping time later. Sensible planning can also keep you from splurging on high-calorie, costly takeout or restaurant meals.

Find a system that works for you, whether it's posting your menu and grocery list on your refrigerator or entering it into your laptop. Weekends are a good time to sketch out your plan and do your shopping, but that depends on your schedule.

Your meal plan for a typical week should include three or four recipes, an ingredient list for those recipes, and creative ways to use leftovers so you don't have to cook from scratch every night.

Keep It Healthy

These tips can help you prepare healthy, low-fat meals:

- **Keep fresh and frozen vegetables on hand.** A supply of salad greens, tomatoes, green onions, and carrots makes it easy to whip up a salad. You can make frozen broccoli, spinach, or other veggies quickly in the microwave and top them with lemon juice and Parmesan cheese for a side dish.
- **Stock your pantry with healthy ingredients** so you can create nourishing dishes with little fuss. Include brown rice, whole wheat pasta, tuna packed in water, kidney and black beans, cans of green chilis and diced tomatoes, prepared

pasta sauces, olive oil, flavored vinegars, and your favorite spices.

- **Use your grill.** Outdoor barbecues and indoor electric grills cook foods quickly and with less fat than pan frying or sautéing.
- **Watch portion sizes.** If you serve healthy foods in unhealthy portions, you won't be able to reach or maintain a healthy weight.
- **Make meatless meals**, which are healthier and less expensive. You can also reduce meat costs by using less meat or substituting beans for part of the meat in casseroles, soups, or stews.

Make It Fast

When time is of the essence, keep these tips in mind:

- Look for recipes with few ingredients. Less measuring, slicing, and dicing make dinner come together faster.
- Use your food processor. These machines are great for chopping vegetables and blending sauces.
- Master quick-cooking techniques. Stir-frying and microwaving take less time than stewing, for example.
- Double your recipes and freeze them in meal-sized containers. Soups, stews, casseroles, and grilled meats freeze beautifully. •

Looking for a great source of healthy, tasty recipes? Check out the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Recipe Finder search engine. You can search by ingredients, recipe name, themes, and more. To get cooking, head to recipefinder.nal.usda.gov.



Answers to Your Questions About Pain Medication Addiction

TAKEN AS DIRECTED, PAIN MEDICATION CAN BE VERY HELPFUL. BUT IF ABUSED, IT CAN NOT ONLY BE ADDICTIVE—IT CAN BE DANGEROUS.

→ **PEOPLE WHO SUFFER FROM PAIN** are often prescribed medications such as Vicodin, OxyContin, and Hydrocodone. These pain medications are beneficial when they're taken as directed—but when misused, they can be dangerous and addictive. One study of more than 900,000 people with chronic pain published in the journal *Population Health Management* found that only 25 percent of people who had been given a prescription for pain medications were taking them as directed.

Here are answers to two common questions about this problem.

How can I prevent prescription addiction?

Doctors, pharmacists, and patients each have a role in preventing prescription drug addiction. As a patient, you should:

- Tell your doctor about all the prescription and over-the-counter medications and

supplements you take before you receive a new prescription.

- Provide a complete medical history and accurate description of your condition. That can help ensure the physician prescribes appropriate medication and treatment.
- Always follow prescription instructions on the dosage and timing.
- Be aware of potential interactions with other drugs and alcohol. Read all the information provided by the pharmacist when you get a new medication.
- Never increase or decrease doses or abruptly stop taking a medication without discussing it with your doctor. If a prescription painkiller you're taking isn't controlling your pain, for example, you shouldn't take more of the medication without your doctor's approval.
- Never take another person's prescribed pain medication.

What are some signs and symptoms of prescription abuse and addiction?

The warning signs of prescription abuse vary depending on the medication. They may include:

- Constricted pupils, slurred speech, or loss of appetite
- Personality changes, mood swings, or clumsiness
- Needing to borrow money or acting increasingly secretive
- Unfamiliar pills or missing pills
- Running out of prescription pain medication sooner than expected

See a doctor if you believe you or someone you love could be abusing or addicted to prescription pain medications. •

For more, visit the National Institute of Drug Abuse at www.drugabuse.gov.

The Science of Addiction

Drug and alcohol dependence aren't mere character flaws. They're diseases that change the way the brain functions. Scientists have examined brain scans of those who are addicted. They can see differences in areas that control decision-making, learning, memory, and control.

On first use, drugs stimulate the brain's reward system and release mood-boosting chemicals. Over time, more of the substance is needed to get the same "high." Emptiness and sadness set in when an addict isn't using.

The person will do almost anything to get alcohol or drugs—even if it hurts others or his or her own health.

Medications targeting these brain problems, therapy to change behavior, or a combination of the two help treat addiction. The best choice depends on the person, so talk with your doctor if you or someone you love is affected by substance abuse.

All About Vitamin E

Experts are researching how this antioxidant might prevent disease

EVERYONE'S ALWAYS TALKING ABOUT VITAMIN D, BUT VITAMIN E SOMETIMES GET LEFT OUT IN THE COLD. NOT ANYMORE, THOUGH—RESEARCHERS BELIEVE THIS MINERAL MAY HAVE MANY DISEASE-FIGHTING PROPERTIES.

→ VITAMIN E HAS GENERATED INTENSE INTEREST AMONG RESEARCHERS, MAINLY FOR ITS ANTIOXIDANT PROPERTIES.

Antioxidants protect cells from damage by free radicals, which are thought to play a role in cardiovascular disease, cancer, Alzheimer's disease, and other conditions. One of these antioxidants, vitamin E (as alpha-tocopherol), might, for example, prevent blood clots that can lead to heart attack and stroke, and it may enhance immunity. The hope is this nutrient could prevent or delay several serious conditions.

Mixed Results

Researchers have observed that people with higher vitamin E intake have lower rates of heart disease, certain cancers, and Alzheimer's disease. However, results of some clinical trials—designed to check whether vitamin E *causes* these lower rates—have been disappointing. Several trials found vitamin E didn't protect against cardiovascular problems, like heart attack, stroke, or chest pain. In 2008, a large prostate cancer study was halted early because there was no sign that vitamin E reduced the risk for this or any other cancer. A 2009 report described some people with Alzheimer's disease maintaining their cognitive function after six months on vitamin E, but others could not maintain that function. Also, in two trials, people taking vitamin E had increased risk for hemorrhagic stroke, which is uncontrolled bleeding in the brain.

Who Might Benefit

Why doesn't vitamin E seem to be living up to its promise? It appears some people respond to vitamin E, but others don't. Studies that target "responders" might get more positive

results. Timing could matter, too. Vitamin E might reduce heart disease risks better in younger, healthier people than in older people who already have signs of the disease. Some studies show health benefits only after many years of taking vitamin E, so studies simply may not be long enough.

Until more is known, follow a common-sense approach. Eat a varied diet, rich in plant-based products. No adverse effects are linked to the amounts of vitamin E in foods. Good sources include almonds, tomatoes, fortified breakfast cereals, sunflower and safflower oils, and leafy greens like spinach, turnip greens, and beet greens.

Along with eating a healthy diet, taking a multivitamin can help you get enough nutrients. If you take supplements that

contain vitamin E, stay below the upper intake level for vitamin E set by the Institute of Medicine: 1,500 IU per day for adults age 19 or older, less for children and teens. If you have any health problems and are taking medication, talk with your doctor or pharmacist about whether to take supplemental vitamin E. It may interact with other treatments, such as medicines like warfarin (Coumadin) that prevent blood clots. New studies are published regularly, so ask how the latest results relate to you. •

Learn more about vitamins at the on-line home of the National Institutes of Health. Visit www.nlm.nih.gov and type "vitamins" into the search box.

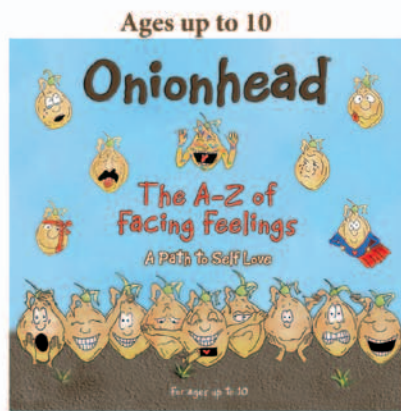
RESEARCHERS HAVE OBSERVED THAT
**people with higher vitamin E
intake have lower rates OF HEART
DISEASE, CERTAIN CANCERS, AND
ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE.**

It is never too early or too late to transform our lives.

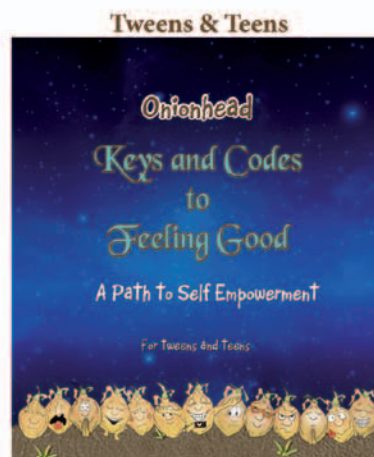
Onionhead Programs

Ages 2-102

These age appropriate comprehensive programs guide our transformation to bring out the good we already have in ourselves.



Ages up to 10 is a time when children form their personality in alliance with their soul, through knowing their feelings. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that we give them tools to be in touch with what they feel, so that Self will not run riot. The more children learn to respect and love themselves, the better chance they have to love and respect someone else. This program teaches that all feelings are acceptable, however, it is what we do with them that counts, which is the Key to Self Love. Printed in the USA on 100% recycled paper.



Tweens & teens are at a critical point in their development. They spend more time concentrating on their faults rather than their qualities. Pressures and events from every day life can cause problems and situations that they are not ready to deal with. They search for relief in whatever feels good for the moment, yet can cause pain and suffering in their life. This program teaches how to deal with life in a compassionate, intelligent, loving and constructive way, which is the Key to Self Empowerment. Printed in the USA on 100% recycled paper.



Society constantly bombards us with messages that our personal fulfillment comes from what we have, not who we are. When in truth, golden dreams are birthed from and dependent upon our ability to be aware and live our goodness. This program teaches wisdoms that human kind have known from the beginning of time, yet have forgotten. It guides us to live a more joyful, loving and respectful life, which is the Key to Self Mastery. Printed in the USA on 100% recycled paper.

The road to joy is paved with the power of what is good in ourselves.

Onionhead is providing a 10% discount to United Service Association for HealthCare (USA+) members on all purchases in 2011. To receive the member discount on Onionhead products, go to www.usahc.com, click on the Members Only link and select Onionhead.

Is Yoga a Woman's Cure-All?

MANY AMERICANS NOW KNOW THAT YOGA SOOTHES BOTH THE BODY AND THE MIND. ARE YOU ONE OF THEM? IF NOT, READ ON FOR A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO THE POWERS OF YOGA.

- **BREATHING FROM YOUR DIAPHRAGM** can give you a sense of yoga's relaxing powers. Here's how:
1. Sit in a chair with your feet flat on the floor.
 2. Close your eyes, and inhale deeply through your nose. Feel your diaphragm move down toward your stomach.
 3. Exhale out through your mouth, contracting your abdominal muscles.
 4. Repeat this pattern several times.
 5. Stay focused on your breathing.

Yoga enthusiasts claim that this ancient form of exercise is the key to helping women relax, restore, and renew. But is it really worth the hype?

Mind and Body Benefits

Yoga involves performing specific poses, called asanas, in combination with meditation and breathing exercises. But yoga is much more than a New Age craze. Studies show that practicing yoga can increase flexibility, improve balance, and boost muscle strength. Yoga also can teach women to reduce stress and anxiety.

What else? Yoga may help relieve some symptoms associated with heart disease and cancer. It's also an effective complementary therapy for the following medical conditions:

- Asthma
- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Osteoarthritis
- Neck and back pain

Experts say women can reap the health benefits of yoga by practicing just 10 minutes each day.

Is It for You?

Yoga is safe for most women—including those with physical limitations. In fact, many yoga poses can be modified or performed in a chair or bed. However, talk with your doctor before doing yoga if you are:

- Younger than age 16
- In the first trimester of pregnancy
- Breastfeeding

Your doctor can provide the best advice about whether yoga is an appropriate exercise program for you.

Yoga+Exercise = Workout

Some yoga classes are designed to give an aerobic workout. In these classes, students quickly move between the various postures. But don't assume that yoga will raise your heart rate high enough to provide aerobic benefits. Instead, experts say to complement your yoga practice with heart-healthy exercises, such as brisk walking, swimming, cycling, or jogging.

Strike a Pose

If you're ready to try yoga, join a class with a certified instructor. It's one of the safest ways to learn proper techniques—and try out yoga's various forms. Look for classes taught by instructors with several years experience. You also can purchase a book or video from a reliable yoga source. •

You can injure yourself by performing yoga moves incorrectly or forcing your body into a position. So, try new poses cautiously. And be sure to listen to your instructor's directions.



Articles in this magazine are written by professional journalists or physicians who strive to present reliable, up-to-date health information. Our articles are reviewed by medical professionals for accuracy and appropriateness. No magazine, however, can replace the care and advice of medical professionals, and readers are cautioned to seek such help for personal problems.

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Health Care Reform: What's Your View?

WHEN IT COMES TO HEALTH CARE REFORM, YOU HAVE A VOICE—AND YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Reminder!

USA+ Scholarship Program
applications are due by June
30. Get yours in today!

→ **WITH THE MID-TERM ELECTIONS BEHIND US AND THE 2012 ELECTIONS AHEAD OF US, THERE IS STILL MUCH DEBATE ABOUT THE PATIENT PROTECTION AND AFFORDABLE CARE ACT (PPACA)**, which was signed into law a year ago by President Barack Obama on March 23, 2010. Since the passage of PPACA, groups that wish to appeal the law have filed lawsuits on grounds of unconstitutionality and groups that support PPACA have filed lawsuits to uphold the law.

Proponents state that PPACA will lower costs and extend coverage to millions of uninsured Americans. Opponents, though, say that the law will result in increased costs for insured Americans and is unconstitutional. The controversy has divided Democrats and Republicans and has left the states with bureaucratic implementation challenges.

Although the Obama administration is now indicating that they are somewhat supportive of a proposal that would give the states some flexibility in carrying out key parts of the law, this subject continues to be a source of contention for Democrats and Republicans alike.

So what's the score? It's an even score at 2 to 2 (2 for and 2 against) in the lower courts

as conflicting opinions begin their path to the Supreme Court.

The responsibility of the members of the United States Senate and the United States House of Representatives is to represent the people, but many Americans believe that the actions of Congress are diametrically conflicting with the wishes of the people. If you have a state representative that you believe is not voting based on the position of the people in your state, you must make your voice heard. You can make your voice heard by voting in each and every election. Not just the presidential elections, but all elections at the local, city and state levels. Get involved and write letters to your state officials. You can also obtain information about bills related to health care policy and health insurance on our website at www.usahc.com. And remember that together, we can make a difference. •

