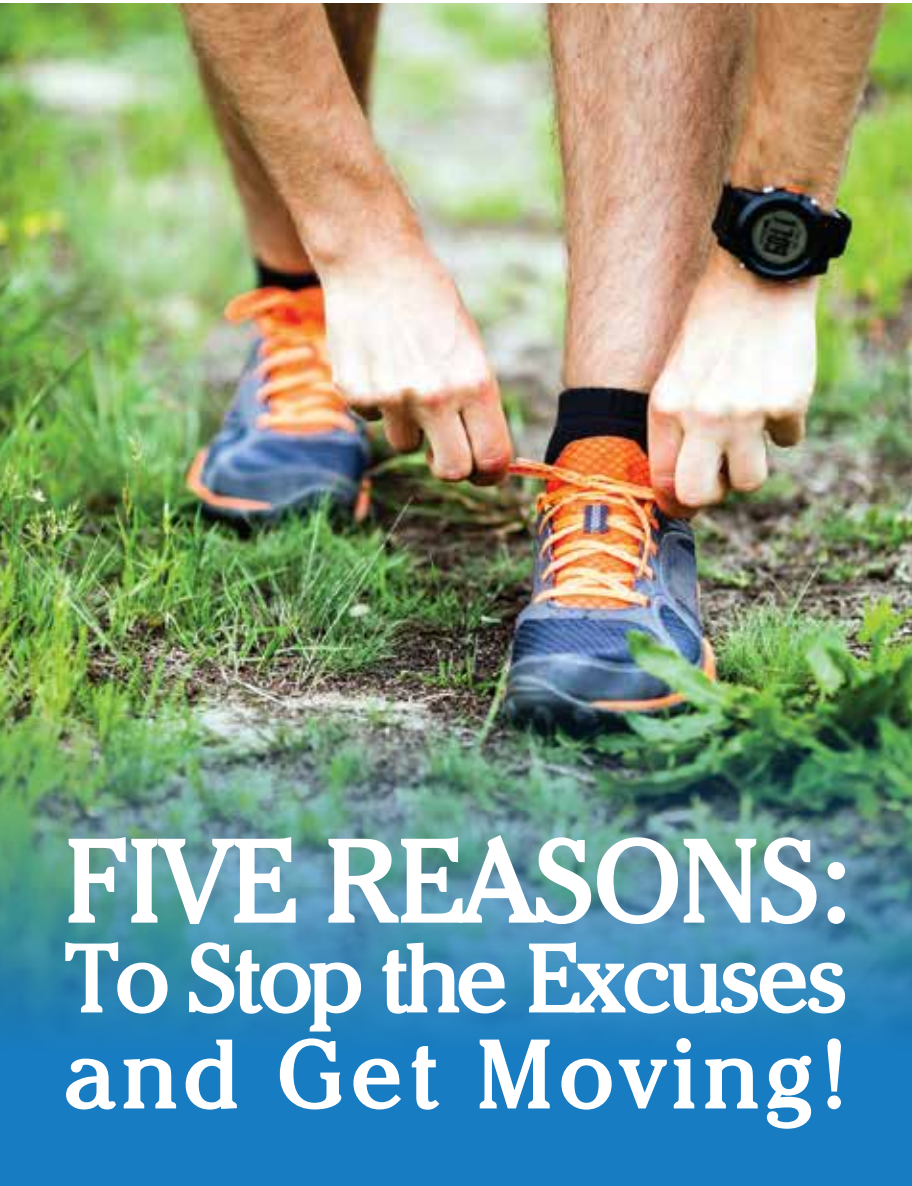


HEALTHY LIVING

Wellness Newsletter from **AAOA**

May 2014



Find Your Flow

Creativity Makes Life Better Page 3

MyAAOABenefits.com



Revamped!

Page 3

Orange-Banana Smoothie



Try this smoothie for a refreshing quick breakfast or light snack on a warm day, with a good dose of Vitamin C.

Ingredients

- 1 cup orange juice
- 1 small, ripe banana
- 1/4 cup instant non-fat milk powder
- 1/2 cup ice cubes
- 1/4 cup club soda

Preparation

In blender, process orange juice, banana, milk powder and ice cubes until mixture is thick and ice cubes are crushed.

Add club soda, stir and serve immediately. (Club soda adds an extra kick to this vitamin-packed smoothie).

Nutrition Facts

Yields 2 Servings

Amount Per Serving

Calories 130 g

Fat 0.5g

Protein 4 g

Carbohydrates 27 g

Fiber 2g

Sodium 55 mg



Five Reasons... To Stop the Excuses and Get Moving!

We have heard them all before... "I don't have time", "Treadmills are boring", "I just got my hair done." Enough is enough. Your body is a temple and it is your responsibility to take better care of it. Exercise can help you lose weight, shape your body, and increase your energy level. But did you know that exercise also can help to make you smarter?

1. A beautiful body leads to a sharper mind.

Interestingly enough, mental agility scores can improve when testing is conducted on a treadmill. That's because exercise increases the blood flow throughout your body and to your brain. The blood carries oxygen that is essential to brain function. More blood and oxygen mean more fuel for your brain.

2. Healthier means happier.

It's hard not to smile while taking a walk out in fresh air, running down a fly ball or splashing around in a cool pool. The happiness factor increases when you find a sport or activity that you truly love. Doctors at the National Institutes of Health say that physical activity also decreases your appetite in general, and may have a significant impact on cravings for sweets.

Regular exercise is at least as effective as medication for helping people with mild to moderate depression.

3. Keep the doctor away.

Exercise can combat serious ailments like osteoporosis, heart disease, diabetes and breast cancer. There's even evidence to suggest that physical activity cuts the duration and severity of the common cold.¹ Regular workouts also increase stamina, energy levels and endurance. You'll notice an increase in your agility, coordination and balance.

4. Sleep and stress relief.

Have you heard of the "runner's high"? It's that feeling of peaceful euphoria that can come from prolonged periods of physical exertion. When you work out at a moderate to high rate of intensity for at least 30 minutes, your pituitary gland releases endorphins and your brain increases its output of serotonin, resulting in a feeling of blissful tranquility. Also, people who regularly engage in exercise have fewer episodes of sleeplessness. Exercise promotes improved sleep quality by allowing smoother and more regular transition between the cycles and phases of sleep and increased time in the deepest Stage 4 sleep. For some, just working out is sufficient to overcome their sleep problems.

5. Boost your self-confidence.

Experts at the Mayo Clinic have found that even small amounts of exercise can reshape the way you think about your appearance and your own self-worth. Doing something healthy for yourself means you grant yourself more value.

¹British Journal of Sports Medicine, Nov 1, 2010.



Find Your Flow: Creativity Makes Life Better

When was the last time you let your creativity run wild? If it's been awhile, you might be missing out on some great benefits.

That's because pursuing creative activities makes people feel good. Whether it's gourmet cooking or scrapbooking or tying fishing flies, a hobby or pastime can reduce your stress — and give you something to look forward to.

But, there's more to it than that. When you're absorbed in an activity, you can enter a mental state called flow.

Once you've got your flow on, you're enjoying the process you're immersed in — for its own sake. And, being in your flow zone can:

- Banish boredom, anxiety and worry
- Boost confidence — and give you a feeling of control
- Foster a sense of fulfillment and serenity
- Restore your energy

How to go with the flow.

What if you've lost touch with your inner artist? Here are some ideas for finding your flow through creative endeavors.

Take a trip down memory lane. What did you enjoy as a child? Maybe you can transform your youthful interests into new ways to create. For example:

If you loved this:	You might try this:
Art	Start a sketchbook - or sign up for a painting or sculpting class.
Comic books	Write your life story-or maybe some fun tales for your children -or grandchildren -in graphic form.
Dress-up	Visit thrift and vintage clothing stores. Then, put together new looks for your wardrobe with what you find.
Nature	Collect and press wildflowers. You might use them to embellish handmade greeting cards.
Neighborhood plays	Look into volunteering with a local theater group.

Try something new. Perhaps there's a creative pursuit you've felt drawn to. For instance, maybe you'd like to try your hand at woodworking, playing the guitar, taking black-and-white photographs or painting watercolor landscapes.

Why not get started? You might begin by talking with someone you know who already has this special talent. Or, look for a how-to book, website or local class.

Savor the journey. No matter how you choose to create — by building birdhouses, designing jewelry or crocheting baby blankets — remember: It's all about being creative, not perfect. So, keep at it — and try not to be a critic. Just enjoy the process. You might surprise yourself!

Health Buzz:

Resources for Living with Low Vision

Do you have low vision that affects your daily life? If so, you probably work closely with your eye doctor — and other specialists — to help stay as independent as possible.

The National Eye Institute wants to lend a hand too. They've developed a resource full of helpful ideas.

It's a free booklet — Living With Low Vision: What You Should Know — with a companion DVD. You can have both mailed to you. You can also listen to an audio version of the booklet online — and watch the full video of the DVD.

The DVD is titled Living With Low Vision: Stories of Hope and Independence. It features real people with low vision. You'll see how they are enjoying life and staying independent.*

You can find the booklet, the video and other tips at nei.nih.gov/lowvision.

*If you're considering vision rehabilitation services, check your benefits plan to see what services may be covered.

Announcement:



MyAAOABenefits.com is Revamped!

One of the many healthcare solutions provided by AAOA Healthcare is a complete employee site! MyAAOABenefits.com is for current subscribers and has just undergone a complete redesign!

Take a minute to explore the site and remind all of your employees they have access to plan information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at myAAOABenefits.com! Additional member benefits are included in the 'MyAdvantages' section.

Ask the Expert: Baseball and Young Arms

Q. My 12-year-old son is a pitcher in youth baseball. He's had a sore shoulder for about a week. Are there things he can do to make it better?

Yes, very likely. If your son has persistent pain, a doctor should see him.

His doctor can evaluate the shoulder. If it's an injury, he or she can determine a treatment plan — and when your son may be able to return to athletic activities.

For immediate relief, resting the shoulder will be the most important step. Applying ice* and taking a pain reliever — such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen — may also be advised.

While it's not the only explanation, it's quite possible that your son has an overuse injury. They're common in the throwing arms — shoulders and elbows — of young pitchers.

Not Something to Play With

With overuse injuries, "toughing it out" can have serious consequences. Your son could do permanent damage to his shoulder joint. And, it could affect his ability to fully participate in sports as he gets older.

Your son will almost certainly need to rest — and recover — with a break from the baseball diamond. His doctor may suggest exercises to improve the shoulder's strength and stability. A young player should be able to perform these moves through a full range of motion — without pain — before he or she starts playing again.

When your son does return to the field, his doctor is likely to advise him to do so gradually — with a throwing rehabilitation program. Ask his doctor to provide specific direction on this program to your son's coach.

Your son's coach should also help him with age-appropriate skill development and proper mechanics. This can help minimize strain on the shoulder and arm.

Even when your son is fully recovered, he should:

- Do the stretching and strength exercises recommended by his doctor.
- Warm up before play. This includes walking or jogging, gentle stretching and easy, gradual throwing.
- Never pitch on back-to-back days — or throw with shoulder or elbow pain.
- Talk with coaches regularly about how his arm is feeling.
- Avoid playing year-round. And, limit the number of baseball teams he's on. Kids who play on more than one team at a time face higher injury risk.

He may also want to try other sports, too. He'll build new skills and lower his risk of an overuse injury.

*Treatment with ice may not be advised for children with diabetes, circulation problems or loss of sensation.

AAOA HEALTHCARE

www.myaaobenefits.com
www.aaomerica.org
www.aaohahealthcare.org

(425) 968.0545
(866) 968.0545 (Toll Free)
10510 NE Northup Way, Suite 200
Kirkland, WA 98033

MAY WELLNESS TIP



Sheridah Bennett
(AAOA Wellness Champion)

Wellness Tip

Make Chores Count

To help get a good work out in, mop the floor, scrub the bathtub or do other housework at a fast pace to get your heart pumping. This will help you to make physical activity a part of your daily routine.

We want your feed-back about the Wellness Newsletter. Please e-mail us at wellness@aaomerica.org with any wellness tips or healthy recipe ideas.