

May 2023

5/2/23: Importance of Strength Training

The recommendations for how much we need to be active include cardio (walking and running) and strength training. You hear plenty about how important moving is but may not know or hear much about the importance of strength training. It is critical for overall health. Strength training includes anything you do to stress your muscles. It can be using stretch bands, weights, or even your own body weight. I'm Clarissa Moon and here are some advantages of building and maintaining your muscle mass as you age.

1. Helps control weight.

Having less muscle has been shown to be an increased risk of being overweight and gaining weight as you age.

2. Decrease risk of chronic illness.

Higher levels of muscle mass are associated with a lower risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, and diabetes.

3. Decrease the risk of falls.

Stronger muscles help with our balance and decrease the risk of falling.

4. Overall feeling of wellbeing.

Being strong improves your mood and self-confidence.

For more information and learning how to start a strength training regimen, visit esmmweighless.com or panola.agrilife.org.

Thanks for listening to the Moon Minute!

<https://esmmweighless.com/why-is-strength-training-important-for-a-healthy-life/>

Further Reading, how to get started: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/fitness/multimedia/weight-training/sls-20076904?s=1>

5/9/23: Can I Prevent Dementia?

When someone develops dementia, it doesn't just impact the one person; but everyone around him/her. For this reason, dementia has an enormous effect on society, more so than many other diseases. I'm Clarissa Moon here with some more info.

It's important to realize a few things when it comes to risk factors and your control. First, there are some things you can control and some things you can't. For example, you can't control or

change your race or age. Now for the things that you *can* change, they're still not a 100% guarantee for preventing dementia.

There are 3 interventions that can help or are "encouraging but inconclusive":

1. Cognitive training- Stay active mentally and never quit learning or challenging yourself. Read, craft, play games, volunteer and socialize.
2. Managing high blood pressure- this has harmful effects on the heart, blood vessels and brain which increases your risk of stroke and vascular dementia. Manage your blood pressure with things like diet and exercise, medication, and quitting tobacco.
3. Physical activity- any increase in physical activity, however small, can help. Physical activity helps with weight management and other aspects of cardiovascular health. Shoot for 150 minutes of moderate activity per week.

If you're interested in learning more about cognition and aging, be sure to check out our Master of Memory series! This program starts this Thursday, May 11 at 10:30 at Sammy Brown. We will meet every Thursday for three weeks. The program is free, just sign up on our website at panola.agrilife.org or call our office at 903-693-0300 extension 160. You can also read more about dementia and cognitive decline at alzheimers.gov.

Thanks for listening to the Moon Minute!

<https://www.alzheimers.gov/can-i-prevent-dementia>

5/16/23: Can Processed Foods be Part of a Healthy Diet?

Processed foods are all around us and sometimes it can be hard to decide just how healthy some processed foods are for our bodies. For example, are frozen vegetables just as good as fresh? Is instant rice just as good as old fashioned? I'm Clarissa Moon here to break it down for you.

First of all, when it comes to food processing, it's important to realize that this occurs on a spectrum. Some foods are processed more than others. Think frozen vegetables versus frozen lasagna. Many of the foods we eat are processed to some extent. In order to consider the health benefits of processed foods, let's examine a few different aspects that can help you determine what's practical and suitable for you and your family.

- 1) Time and effort. This is a big appeal of processed foods. Buying canned beans versus dried ones and whole grain pasta versus making your own can save a lot of time!
- 2) Convenience. Grab-and-go foods are awesome for snacks and sack lunches when you are on-the-go. Products that come in single-serve packages and require little-to-no prep time really can't be beat. Nuts, trail mix, and cheese sticks are some good examples.

- 3) Affordability. The problem with many single-serve foods can be the price tag. Many times it's cheaper to buy a big bag of cereal or nuts and portion it out yourself. Same with meal kits like lunchables and salad kits.
- 4) Nutrition. It may surprise you to learn that some processed foods can actually offer better nutrition than their unprocessed counterparts. For example, many breakfast cereals and juices are fortified with additional vitamins or minerals. Produce is often frozen at the peak of ripeness which also helps preserve the nutrients. However, we need to also consider the flip side that many processed foods contain added sugar, Saturated fats and sodium (which all need to be limited in the diet).
- 5) The whole point here is, it's all about balance. Consider all of the factors I mentioned when purchasing food and think about what's important to you and what's practical. Are you more likely to eat salad if you buy it in a kit versus separate components? How much time do you have to spend preparing food in a given week? Like anything else in life, you have to weigh the pros and cons and decide what's best for you.

For more information, visit foodinsight.org or panola.agrilife.org. Thanks for listening to the Moon Minute!

<https://foodinsight.org/can-processed-foods-find-a-place-in-your-diet/>

5/23/23: ABCS of Heart Health

Do you know your ABC's? What about your ABC's of Heart Health? Heart health is a pivotal part of well-being and heart disease is the leading cause of death in the US. By 2035, it's estimated that more than 130 million adults or 45% of the US population will have some form of heart disease. Don't become a statistic and take care of that ticker now!

I'm Clarissa Moon here with your ABCS of heart health.

A is for aspirin! Ask your health care provider if aspirin could help reduce your risk for heart attack or stroke. Be sure and discuss and medical history with them too.

B is for Blood Pressure! This is the force of blood pushing against the walls of your arteries. High blood pressure is the top risk factor for heart attack or stroke. Monitor yours regularly and talk with your health care provider about where your numbers are at.

C is for Cholesterol. This is the waxy substance that can cause plaque buildup in your arteries and cause heart disease. There are both good and bad kinds of cholesterol so be sure and talk with your care provider about those numbers and ask them (or me!) on how to improve them.

S is for smoke. Smoking raises your blood pressure and increases your risk for heart attack or stroke. It's never too late to quit so don't be afraid to ask for help. Talk with a health care provider or call 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

Now you know your ABCS, next time won't you sing with me?! For more information visit millionhearts.hhs.gov or panola.agrilife.org. Thanks for listening to the Moon Minute.

https://millionhearts.hhs.gov/files/4_Steps_Forward_English.pdf

5/30/23: Act FAST in Response to Stroke

May, and National Stroke Awareness Month, is here for just a couple more days so I thought it was high time to talk to y'all about strokes. Stroke is a leading cause of long-term disability and death for Americans. While risk varies by age, it's important to realize that strokes can and do occur at any age. However, with fast action, the chances of survival improve. That's why it's important to act FAST. I'm Clarissa Moon here with the details.

F is for Face Drooping. Does one side of the face droop? Ask the person to smile and see if both sides are even.

A is for Arm Weakness. Is one arm weak or numb? Ask the person to raise both arms and see if they both stay up or if one drifts downward.

S is speech difficulty. Is speech slurred?

T means time to call 911.

Other symptoms of stroke include numbness, confusion, vision difficulties with one or both eyes, trouble walking and severe headache. Now you know- remember to act FAST in response to strokes. For more information visit stroke.org or panola.agrilife.org. Thanks for listening to the Moon Minute.

<https://www.stroke.org/en/about-stroke/stroke-symptoms>