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Using Health and Fitness Technology with Moderation

Fitness trackers and apps have caught fire with the health conscious. But when it comes to health and fitness, some technology that's meant to help you could be hurting your progress. According to psychologist Michael Woodward, when it come to fitness technology you need to ask yourself if you're adding stress when the goal is to reduce it. If you spend as much time tracking your activity as you do engaging in the activity or exercise, that is probably going to hurt your progress.

There are benefits to using fitness trackers and apps. Wearable fitness tech and apps can help wearers change bad habits. Also, wearables and trackers are great for evaluating how much daily activity you get and how your workout performance is improving (or not) over time. Tracker data can be helpful for staying motivated and helping you achieve your goals.

With that said, fitness isn't all about the numbers. While your tracker can inform you of your running speed and distance, it offers little feedback about the positive psychological benefits of exercise, such as stress relief, relaxation and even building confidence. Focusing too much on the data might distract attention from these non-measurable benefits.

Take a tech-break every week or two. Deliberately exercise *without* your tracker so you can better appreciate the important mental and emotional outcomes of exercise, as well. Bottom line, track in moderation. Don't let the act of tracking dominate your health strategy. *Source: www.acefitness.org*

www.msnbc.com

Massage Therapy for People with Cancer

For people with cancer and cancer histories, massage therapy can be a powerful healing intervention. Massage therapy is an ancient technique that involves manipulating muscles and rubbing or stroking soft tissues of the body. Skilled structured touch has the potential to reduce isolation, relieve symptoms and help people feel cared for, whole and empowered. Massage therapy is not used instead of cancer treatments such as chemotherapy, radiotherapy, surgery, or drug therapy, but as a complementary therapy to reduce the side effects caused by the conventional treatments.

Patients often report relief from the five common symptoms associated with cancer and its treatment: pain, anxiety, nausea, fatigue, and depression. Of these five symptoms, it is most commonly reported that therapeutic massage helps to relieve anxiety associated with the diagnosis, treatment, stages, and complications of cancer. A University of Minnesota study of 230 people undergoing chemotherapy found that massage and Healing Touch lowered total mood disturbance; massage therapy lowered anxiety and reduced the use of analgesics; and Healing Touch reduced fatigue.

Therapeutic/medical massage therapy is available on site at GE Aviation Evendale. To schedule an appointment please call the GE Family Wellness Center (513) 853-8900. Massage therapy is provided at no cost to GE employees as part of your benefits. Preventing and minimizing occupational injury is our priority.

Source: www.cancercouncil.com.au/17958/b1000/massage-and-cancer-42/massage-and-cancer-benefits-of-touch/#guLRyfPF3PMv1Cvm.99

Dietician Corner
Hannah Griswold, MS, RDN, LDN

Can we change the types of food we crave?

Do you struggle to resist cravings for foods that are high in sugar and fat? Recent research suggests that your gut bacteria may be the cause. We have an immense amount of bacteria in our GI tract. In fact, our bacterial genes outnumber human genes by a factor of 100 to 1. The species of bacteria we host in our GI tract vary depending on the nutrients they need and what substrates are provided in our diet. Some prefer fat, sugar or fiber. However, the coin is two sided. Our diet not only influences what types of bacteria we host in our body, but the types of bacteria we have also influence our eating decisions and cravings. They shape our eating preferences to improve their own chances of survival. How do these tiny organisms impact our eating behaviors? Researchers suggest multiple potential mechanisms including:

- Manipulating our reward pathway by affecting the levels of dopamine and serotonin in our gut
- Producing toxins in the absence of nutrients that can affect our mood and influence our desire to eat through our appetite-regulating hormones
- Acting through the vagus nerve, which connects 100 million nerve cells from the digestive tract to the base of the brain, and can affect eating behavior and body weight
- Changing our taste receptors

So what can you do to positively influence the type of gut bacteria you host? The first thing is to **consume a diversified, nutrient dense diet** full of fruits, vegetables, nuts/seeds, beans/legumes, lean meats and low-fat dairy to increase the variety of gut bacteria. Second, you want to **increase prebiotic (food for bacteria) and probiotic (beneficial types of bacteria) in your diet**. Food sources of prebiotics include bananas, onions, garlic, leeks, asparagus, artichokes, soybeans and whole-wheat foods. Food sources of probiotics include yogurt, kefir, aged cheeses, kimchi, sauerkraut, miso, tempeh, and kombucha. Lastly, **incorporate more exercise, yoga and meditation** to influence vagus nerve activity. Studies show that this can help you consume the right amount of food relative to your energy expenditure and can aid in weight loss.

In conclusion, what we eat impacts the type of bacteria we host in our body. Shifting to a healthier diet can actually cause us to acquire different varieties of bacteria and therefore change our taste preferences and cravings. *Does this mean it's possible to reduce your cravings for cupcakes and in turn desire more carrots and bananas? It most certainly does!*

Source: Alcock J, Maley CC, and Aktipis CA. Is eating behavior manipulated by the gastrointestinal microbiota? Evolutionary pressures and potential mechanisms. Bioessays. 2014; 36(10): 940-949.

Blood Pressure, Heart Rate…What's the Difference?

What's the difference between blood pressure and heart rate? While your blood pressure is the force of your blood moving through your blood vessels, your heart rate is the number of times your heart beats per minute. A rising heart rate does not cause your blood pressure to increase at the same rate. Even though your heart is beating more times a minute, healthy blood vessels dilate (get larger) to allow more blood to flow through more easily. When you exercise, your heart speeds up so more blood can reach your muscles. It may be possible for your heart rate to double safely, while your blood pressure may respond by only increasing a modest amount.

	Blood Pressure	Heart Rate
What is it?	The force the heart exerts against the walls of arteries as it pumps blood out to the body	The number of times your heart beats per minute
What is the unit of measurement?	mm Hg (millimeters of mercury)	BPMs (beats per minute)
What do the numbers represent? 	Includes two measurements: Systolic pressure (top number): The pressure as the heart beats and forces blood into the arteries Diastolic pressure (bottom number): The pressure as the heart relaxes between beats	Includes a single number representing the number of heartbeats per minute
Sample reading	120/80 mm Hg	60 BPM

Source: www.heart.org