



In uniqueness there is no competition and no comparison

NEWSLETTER 4 – SEPTEMBER 2009

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Does fitness offset fatness?

Far too few of us are active and lean, the ideal combination for staving off heart disease and a variety of other chronic conditions. These days, most adults are overweight, inactive, or both. If you could be just one — active or lean — which would be better?

Researchers have been chasing the answer to that question for some time. Early research suggested that exercise could cancel out the health of carrying extra pounds. It's a comforting idea, and one that has gotten a lot of press. But it is probably an oversimplification of a complex connection between weight, physical activity, and health.

Flip-flop findings

A team from the Cooper Institute for Aerobics Research in Dallas kicked the debate into high gear in 1998 with a provocative report. The researchers measured the body composition of 22,000 men and asked each to complete an exhaustive treadmill test. After eight years of follow-up, 428 of the men had died. Those who were overweight but deemed physically fit by their performance on the treadmill test were half as likely to have died as men who were lean

but not fit. What's more, death rates were virtually the same among fit overweight men and fit lean men.

Other Cooper Institute studies, some of which included women, further supported the idea that physical fitness is more important than weight, at least when it comes to living longer.

Not everyone agreed. North Carolina researchers looked at death rates among more than 5,000 men and women who took part in an early cholesterol-lowering trial. In this group, being fit offered little protection against the health risks linked to excess weight.

The latest salvo comes from the Women's Health Study, a 10-year trial of aspirin and vitamin E among nearly 40,000 middle-aged women. As you might expect, the odds of having a heart attack, needing bypass surgery or angioplasty, or dying of heart disease grew with increasing weight and with decreasing activity. In each weight category (healthy, overweight, and obese), women who burned at least 1,000 calories a week with exercise or physical activity were less likely to have had heart trouble than those who were inactive. But here's the kicker: exercise didn't eliminate the cardiovascular hazards of excess weight.

Earlier work, from the Women's Health Study and the Harvard-based Nurses' Health Study, have also come to the conclusion that exercise doesn't erase the health-related consequences of carrying too many pounds.

What does this mean for you?

Exercise is the single best thing you can do to prevent or control heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, gallstones, depression, and a host of other physical woes. That's true whether your weight is squarely in the normal range or you could afford to lose a few pounds.

Consider exercise and a healthy weight to be partners in your efforts to stay healthy or get healthy. Physical activity and weight loss (when needed) improve the flexibility of arteries. They lower blood pressure and improve cholesterol levels. They ease inflammation throughout the body. And they make blood less likely to form clots inside arteries, which can trigger heart attacks and strokes. Exercise helps you lose or maintain weight, while losing weight can give you more energy and mobility for exercise.

This doesn't mean you need to run marathons. Walking for at least 30 minutes a day is great. Walking for longer, or doing something more intense, is even better. You don't need to instantly slim down to what's considered to be a healthy weight, either. If you are overweight, losing just 5% to 10% of your weight will start you on the road to better health.

Tall people tend to be heavier than short people, so doctors use the body mass index (BMI), a measure of weight for height.

Overweight is defined as a BMI over 25; obesity is defined as a BMI over 30. A large waist — over 40 inches in a man or 35 inches in a woman — is worrisome, too.

Working out is a key ingredient for good health. So is aiming for, or keeping, a healthy weight. Put them together and you optimize your chances of having the healthiest and longest life possible.

The big question is asked: What is the real core of core training?

Every exerciser is facing today the onslaught of various Modern programs such as Pilates and Core Conditioning which are promoting core. Everyone is talking about it and everyone is doing it or teaching it. But, still, no one has asked the relevant questions, no one knows exactly what is the core, no one has ever produced any evidence that core training is effective or that all these wonderful latest approaches enhance our lives the way the marketing material is claiming. Clients follow these programs religiously hoping for that magic change and holding onto their self image dreams created by themselves when marketing materials claim: get lean muscles, improve your posture, prevent injuries and many more. How vague are these words. What is lean for an example?

It is now the first time that the world starts to questions these latest approaches. In the latest Idea magazine, March 2004, relevant questions are asked. Experts are guiding us and now it is clear that:

- Majority of people doing the so called “core focused exercises” do not work their core at all or correctly
- All these latest equipment claiming to “strengthen and improve the core” have no evidence to substantiate any of the claims.
- The fact that you do these exercises or programs is no indication that you improve your core
- People differ to what is the foundation of core and which muscles belong to the so-called core group. If the experts are uncertain, what do the followers teach?

- Proper core activation requires that muscle switch on or fire in a certain pattern. Each individual may experience his or her own fire patterning created by habitual movement patterns or movement history including injuries or lack of movement. Unless the pattern is not understood by the person who teaches core, or a wrong pattern is not unlocked, it is impossible to reinforce the proper required core firing pattern. Any kind of core training, without the proper assessment and insight of the pattern, will reinforce the already established pattern in the individual. Unfortunately, core requires a specific specialised individualised approach.
- There is no guarantee that any core exercise works or that all will benefit by doing the same core exercise or program. The fact that you sit on a ball and perform an exercise on the Pilates bed, stand on a bosu or a balancing board, is no indication that the core works. You can do all these exercise with the core muscles ineffectively engaged or using the inappropriate muscles. Any observer will find it very difficult to tell when someone is using the core or not. Core is a feeling the exerciser experience.
- Majority of fitness professionals do not truly understand what the requirements are for core activation and may create bigger problems by advocating that certain activities promote core.
- Core works on reflex and this happens automatically when the body moves. We can not move without a basic involvement of the core. All movement involve the core. The question is, how effectively is the core working or to what degree does it not work and why does it not work effectively? Static exercises on the back for hours can hardly assist you in your core functioning during upright movement patterns.
- Most of the population will seldom be able to recruit the core automatically and on a reflex level. Individual assessment and programming is a first priority for discovering the correct muscle firing patterning of the core and to activate the core muscles. If the teacher does not understand how you move, it is impossible to correct any movement patterns and therefore the core of the body.
- Core is about neuromuscular wiring. It is more than just copying the so called core exercises on the Pilates bed, ball or bosu with hundreds of other in the class. Often, due to various reasons, the functioning of certain muscles are compromised or inhibited. A very special approach is required to activate the appropriate muscles and create a positive neuromuscular wiring. Core Training in the wrong hands, can create and or perpetuate existing muscular imbalances and faulty movement patterns. So, you think it works, but it doesn't. It can create more problems than fixing the so-called core.
- We have been using our cores from the first day we started to move our bodies. A baby kicking the legs is building a foundation to effective core. Core cannot be taught with verbal cues. We learn to move and use our core before we learn to talk. Core is about a feeling. A baby cannot walk without effective core. What we need to ask, what went wrong along the line that we suddenly want to learn something we did beautifully as a one year old, at the age of forty? Perhaps we should go back to our baby phase and become less passive in our daily lives and start moving the body actively.

New Report Finds Flaws in Sunscreen Protection, Safety

July 3, 2009 — Sunscreens are improving, but three of five brand-name products either don't protect the skin from sun damage sufficiently, contain hazardous chemicals, or both, according to a report by the watchdog organization Environmental Working Group (EWG).

"I'd give the industry a C minus," says Jane Houlihan, EWG's senior vice president for research. "They have moved from a D to a C-minus in my book."

Overall, however, she says the industry is "not doing enough to protect consumers from UVA radiation."

The report is called the EWG 2009 Sunscreen Guide. An industry spokesman says the report is flawed.

Dermatologists who reviewed the report for WebMD offered praise and criticism. "Some points are definitely correct," says Henry Lim, MD, chairman of the department of dermatology at Henry Ford Health Systems, Detroit. But, he adds, "This report has somewhat of an alarmist tone."

Sandra Read, MD, a Washington, D.C., dermatologist and member of the board of directors of the American Academy of Dermatology, says she finds the report discouraging but says she hopes it will raise awareness of the need for sunscreen.

The 2009 Study on Sunscreen Effectiveness

This year's report is the third annual from EWG, which investigated 1,572 sunscreens, lip balms, and daily moisturizers with sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15, typically the minimum recommended.

This year's study, as those in the past, was triggered, according to EWG, because the FDA has not set comprehensive safety standards for sunscreens. The agency has set guidelines for UVB protection but those for UVA are pending. UVA rays are associated with skin sagging and wrinkles, but more recently have also been associated with skin cancer; UVB rays can lead to skin cancer and sunburn.

The FDA is lagging behind other countries, the report charges, because it has approved only 17 sunscreen chemicals for U.S. use, compared to at least 29 in other countries.

To do the 2009 study, EWG scientists got a list of ingredients from retailers and then used numerous databases to evaluate safety and effectiveness.

10-Best Lists

Scientists from EWG developed a "best" list for sunscreens, lip balms, and moisturizers. On the 10 best sunscreens list (many sold online):

- Soleo Organics Sunscreen Organic chemical-free sunscreen, SPF 30+
- Badger Sunscreen, SPF 30
- UV Natural Sunscreen, SPF 30+
- Mexitan Sunscreen Lotion, SPF 50
- Lavera Sunscreen Neutral, SPF 40
- California Baby Sunscreen Lotion No Fragrance, SPF 30+
- Trukid Sunny Days Facestick Mineral Sunscreen UVA/UVB Broad Spectrum, SPF 30+
- Kabana Skin Care Green Screen Organic Sunscreen, SPF 22, Skin Tone Tinted
- Obagi Nu-Derm Physical UV Block, SPF 32
- Elta MD UV Physical, SPF 41.

On the top 10 lip balm list:

- Fallene cotz LipCotz, Ultra High Sun Protection, SPF 45
- Jane Iredale LipDrink, SPF 15
- Badger Lip Balm, SPF 15
- Caribbean Blue-natural basics Lip Shield, SPF 15
- Shady Day Shady Kiss Lip Balm, SPF 30
- Bare Escentuals Lip Guard, SPF 15
- Lavanila Laboratories The Healthy Lip Butter, SPF 15, Pure Vanilla, SPF 15
- Jack Black Intense Therapy Lip Balm Lemon & Chamomile, SPF 25
- Rx Suncare Lip Balm Sunblock, SPF 45
- Crabtree & Evelyn Naturals Protective Lip Balm, SPF 8, Cocoa butter & Cardamom

And the top 10 SPF moisturizers, according to EWG:

- Keys Soap Solar Rx Cosmetic Moisturizing sunblock, SPF 30
- Marie Veronique Organics Crème de Jour Tinted, SPF 30, no nanoparticles
- Devita International Daily Solar Protective Moisturizer 30
- SanRe Organic Skinfood Supple Sunshine, Organic Rosemary and Lavender Day Creme (Dry to Normal), SPF 30
- Lotus Moon Sage Sun Protective Crème, SPF 25
- Institut Dermed Sun Protective Cream Oil Free, Untinted, SPF 28
- N.V. Perricone M.D., Targeted Care Solar Protection Face with DMAE, SPF 26
- Sue Devitt Promarine Tinted Moisturizer, SPF 30, Capri
- Sun Science Organic Daily Wear, SPF 30
- Karen's Botanical Lovely Lavender Cream, SPF 15

Failures and Improvements

Among the failings of the sunscreen products and industry, according to EWG:

- Only 5% of products overall met their criteria for safety and sunscreen effectiveness -- and that includes blocking UVA and UVB, maintaining stability, and having no or few ingredients with health hazards.
- Product claims are overstated, promising such things as "all day" protection.
- Many spray and powder products contain tiny "nano-scale" ingredients that could be absorbed more easily in the lungs and cause problems.

EWG scientists did find that 70% of sunscreens available this year contain strong UVA filters, compared to just 29% last year. Among the top brands that were reformulated to boost UVA protection are Solbar, Zia Natural Skincare, Nivea, L'Oreal, and Hawaiian Tropic.

The ingredient oxybenzone, which the EWG contends disrupts hormone systems, was in 19% fewer sunscreens this year, according to the report.

Among the 339 sunscreens not recommended are:

- Coppertone NutraShield, Sunscreen Lotion SPF 30
- Neutrogena Ultra Sheer Dry-Touch Sunblock, SPF 30
- Huggies Little Swimmers Sunscreen, Moisturizing Blue Melon Splash
- Jason Natural Cosmetics Sunbrellas: Complete Block Spray, SPF 26
- CVS Sport Sunblock Lotion, SPF 30

Industry Response

The recent EWG report is "unscientific and unsubstantiated," says John Bailey, chief scientist for the Personal Care Products Council, an industry group, in a statement.

In part, the statement also reads: "Consumers can be confident in the safety of the sunscreens they buy for themselves and their families because all sunscreens sold in the U.S. are regulated as over-the-counter (OTC) drugs by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which requires them to go through rigorous scientific assessment and approval process that includes safety and performance testing before marketing."

In a telephone interview, Bailey tells WebMD: "I think there are so many flaws in this report that it's difficult to really know where to start." One flaw, he says, is that "they should have consulted real experts in the area," Instead, he says, they developed their own way of scoring and didn't consider ingredient stability in a realistic way.

Other Opinions

"The most important thing they highlight is that the FDA is really lagging behind in getting a UVA rating," says Eric Schweiger, MD, a Manhattan dermatologist and clinical instructor of dermatology at Mount Sinai School of Medicine, New York, who reviewed the report for WebMD.

The report also contends that higher SPF products may tempt people to stay out longer, but Schweiger says he tells patients to use as high as possible "because people tend to not apply it right."

Lim says the report's authors caution that oxybenzone can be absorbed into the skin. "It's true, but there is no evidence that it is of any clinical significance."

Lim also points out that sunscreens are improving, according to the report. "Not all products have good UVA protection," he says, "but more do."

"Ingredients are not the full story of good sun protection," says Read. Using sunscreen correctly, using the right sunscreen for your exposure and skin type, and reapplying every two hours is crucial, she says.

Lim advises patients to look for ingredients known to help protect against UVA, such as avobenzene (Parsol 1789), titanium dioxide, zinc oxide, or mexoryl.