

Core issues

April 2015

National stress awareness month

April is National Stress Awareness Month! Since 1992, this month has been dedicated to raising awareness and educating the public on the causes of stress, and how to cope with it. You can experience stress from your environment, your body and your thoughts. A little bit of stress is actually good for us. It gives us energy and motivates us to complete our daily tasks. How-



ever, oftentimes, stress levels are far too high and can actually lead to many health problems. In fact, it is estimated that 75-90% of all **doctor's visits are for stress-related ailments and complaints.** Stress can play a role in headaches, high blood pressure, heart problems, diabetes, skin conditions, depression, anxiety, and much more!

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Local events in april

◇ **April 11-12:** Santa Fe College Spring Arts Festival

◇ **April 22:** LGAA 5K and Corporate Team Challenge

◇ **April 25:** Just For the Health of it 5K



Ways to cope with stress

Yoga

In Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, yoga means “**spiritual discipline.**” People often associate yoga with the postures and stances that make up the physical activity of the practice, but yoga is much more than that! Yoga helps to build muscle strength, improve flexibility and posture, and it **decreases stress.**



Meditation

Meditation is a means of transforming the mind. It is a way of silencing the mind, promoting clarity **and peace in one’s life.** Meditation greatly affects the brain. The picture below represents the brain before and after meditation. **Don’t know where to start? Download the Smiling Mind app on your smartphone!**



What happens to the brain before and after meditation?

Frontal Lobe

This is the most highly evolved part of the brain, responsible for reasoning, planning, emotions and self-conscious awareness. During meditation, the frontal cortex tends to go offline.

Parietal Lobe

This part of the brain processes sensory information, orienting you in time and space. During meditation, activity in the parietal lobe slows down.

Thalamus

The gatekeeper for the senses, this organ focuses your attention by funneling some sensory data deeper into the brain and stopping other signals. Meditation reduces the flow of incoming information.

More ways to cope with stress

Get some sleep!

A good night's sleep makes you able to tackle the day's stresses more easily. When you are tired, you are less patient and more easily agitated, which can increase stress. Most adults need 7-9 hours of sleep per night. Practicing anti-stress techniques can also improve quality and quantity of sleep!

"The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another." —William James

Eat a balanced diet!

Junk foods and refined sugars low in nutritional value and high in calories can leave us feeling out of energy and sluggish. A healthy diet, low in sugar, caffeine, and alcohol, can help promote health and reduce stress.

Spire—body and mind monitor

Spire tracks your breathing patterns and activity for real time insights into your state of mind. It is a monitor that you can clip onto your waist, or wherever you find comfortable. Spire sees moments of tension, focus, calm and activity and provides feedback for a better



day. If the Spire monitor notices that you're breathing is too shallow due to stress, it will alert you and walk you through a breathing exercise. This can greatly help reduce stress and alter the way you react to stressful situations.

To learn more about the Spire Monitor/ Mindfulness Tracker, visit:

<https://spire.io/>

Lower cortisol levels, increase endorphins!

Recipe of the Month

Date, Bacon and Goat Cheese Chicken

Ingredients

8-10 pitted dates, coarsely chopped
2 shallots, thinly sliced
2 oz Deli goat cheese, crumbled
3 slices bacon
1 3/4 lb boneless, skinless chicken breasts
1 1/2 teaspoons garlic/herb seasoning
1/4 teaspoon pepper
1 tablespoon oil (coconut oil, canola, etc.)
1 cup chicken broth



Prep

- Chop dates (1 cup). Slice shallots.
- Crumble cheese.
- Cut bacon into 1/2 inch pieces.

Steps

1. Preheat large sauté pan on medium-high 2-3 minutes. Season chicken with herb seasoning and pepper (wash hands). Place oil in pan, then add chicken; cook 2-3 minutes each side or until browned. Remove chicken from pan.
2. Reduce heat to medium and add bacon; cook 3-4 minutes or until crisp. Add shallots and dates; cook 2 more minutes.
3. Remove pan from heat. Add wine and return chicken to pan. Reduce heat to low and cover; simmer 10-12 minutes or until chicken is 165°F.
4. Remove chicken from pan and cut into slices. Spoon date mixture on top of chicken; top with cheese. Serve.

For more publix aprons recipes, visit <http://www.publix.com/recipes-planning/aprons-recipes>

Dessert of the month

*Simple Oat and Pecan **Blueberry** Crisp*

Ingredients:

- 1 cup rolled oats
- 1 cup pecan halves (about 3/4 cup chopped)
- 1/2 cup almond meal
- 1/2 cup unsweetened coconut
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp cinnamon
- 1/4 cup + 2 TBS olive oil
- 1/3 cup pure maple syrup or raw honey
- 4 cups blueberries

Instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Chop the pecans. Combine the oats, pecans, almond meal, coconut, salt, and cinnamon in a large bowl. Add the olive oil and maple syrup and stir until well mixed.
2. Grease a square baking dish (8x8) or (9x9) and arrange the blueberries in the bottom. Top with the oat mixture. Bake for 25-35 minutes or until the top is golden brown and has firmed up slightly. If you want, you can top with additional flaked coconut and return to the oven for another 5 minutes.

For the drizzle on top:

Cream 4 ounces light cream cheese with 1/4 cup light coconut milk, 1/2 tsp vanilla and 1 TBS raw honey. Leftover sauce can be used as a fruit dip!



Exercise of the month: tabata!

Tabata training is a high intensity interval training workout that lasts for 4 minutes at a time. Studies show that Tabata exercises can increase both the aerobic and anaerobic systems in the body. The idea of Tabata training is to push yourself as hard as

you can for 20 seconds, rest (or active rest) for 10 seconds and repeat this for 4 minutes. These short, intense workouts provide improved athletic capacity and condition, improved glucose metabolism, and improved fat burning.

Tabata Idea!

1. Burpees
2. Push-Ups
3. Jumping Jacks
4. Mountain Climbers

Repeat X2

How to do Burpees



Fun facts



Grass-fed beef contains 2-5X more **omega 3's** than **grain-fed** beef!

According to Fitness Magazine, lemons rank as one of the healthiest foods in the world. Why? One lemon contains your daily dose of vitamin C, it cleanses the liver, boosts your immunity and aids in weight loss. Try adding fresh lemon to your water!



In an average day, Chipotle uses 97,000 pounds of avocados; they use 70 avocados to make a single batch of guacamole.

Free range, cage-free eggs have 1/3 less cholesterol, 1/4 less saturated fat, 2X more omega-3's, **3X more vitamin E**, and **7X more beta-carotene** than the commercially-produced variety.



While a daily exercise routine is great for everyone, it is also very important to schedule spontaneous physical activities into your daily routine if you are seated at a computer or other workstation for the majority of the day. This is important not only in helping burn some extra calories that you would not be burning but will also help to promote a healthier neck and back since sitting is often **seen as the “silent killer” of the spine.** **This spontaneous activity can be as simple as using the stairs or walking during work breaks.** Using a pedometer can help you monitor your daily physical activity both inside and outside of the gym.

Nutrition Tip: Snacks are not the enemy in your efforts to drop a few pounds as long as they are balanced in carbohydrate, fat, and protein. Three simple options for snacks are:

Hummus (2 oz.) with raw vegetables (3oz.) makes a delicious snack and is high in heart-healthy fats, protein, fiber, vitamins and minerals (Approximately 85 calories)

Cucumber/tomato salad makes a delicious snack that is very easy to prepare. Mix half a cucumber (not peeled) and half a tomato (sliced) with a teaspoon of distilled vinegar to taste with spices, dried dill weed, fresh pepper, and a dash of sea salt (Approximately 75 calories)

Fresh berries (1/3 cup) (blueberries, strawberries, or blackberries) with walnuts/almonds (1/4 cup) makes another delicious snack which is higher in calories (Approximately 225 calories) but very rich in heart healthy fats, protein, vitamins and minerals

Weight loss tips: You can easily and effortlessly lose ½ to 1 pound per week by creating a negative calorie balance of between 250 to 500 calories a day. Making a few reasonable decisions each day with your calorie balance in mind can add up to a successful weight loss/management program. Three strategies you may use to help you start are as follows:

Replace your daily candy bar with a small piece of dark chocolate and save yourself over 200 calories

Add just 30 minutes of BRISK walking into your daily routine and burn about 150 calories.

Stop drinking calories by reducing your intake of soda and “fruit” juice and save yourself 150 to 250 calories

****Remember that the Summer Sports Performance program begins on June 8, 2015. For more information please contact the fitness center and a staff member will be able to assist you.****