



HEALTH & WELLNESS

WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

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Health & Wellness Committee

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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The Health & Wellness Committee was established in September 2004 as a result of discussions with Seine River Teachers' Association. Through a letter of understanding it was agreed to start up a joint committee of labour representatives and divisional employees to "to review strategies to incorporate health and wellness into the workplace".

A growing body of research indicates that a focus on workplace health and wellness initiatives have positive implications for both companies and employees. Studies have found that health benefits and economic benefits can result through the implementation of workplace wellness policies and programs in organizations.

In May 2005 a Health Risk Appraisal was conducted by the Wellness Institute. Based on this survey, the division received aggregate data which has helped guide the Health & Wellness Committee. With this information, an operational plan was developed which focused on 4 priorities: Communication, Morale, Physical Activity and Stress Management. In April 2007, a follow-up survey was once again administered by the Wellness Institute.

Since the Health & Wellness initiative commenced numerous steps have been taken

from a divisional perspective to raise the profile of health & wellness across the division. Some of these steps include: Meetings of the standing committee to discuss how to best promote a healthy workplace; Volunteer Wellness Representatives at each school to help promote, encourage and champion wellness at their school; Seine River School Division's First Annual Fishing Derby; Annual Volleyball Tournaments; Support for Divisional In-Service days; Presentation to other school divisions and organizations on the Seine River School Division model of Health & Wellness; Financial support to each site to assist in the implementation of wellness initiatives.

In addition to these divisional initiatives, countless site-based initiatives have been undertaken which include: Walking clubs, Healthy lunches, Themed meals, Movie and popcorn nights, Exercise programs (yoga, lunch time activities, etc.), Office decorating contests, Wellness boards, "Pay it forward" program, and many others.

The job climate and healthy lifestyle practices of employees of the division improved in many ways since the survey was completed for the first time in 2005

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Exercise: Rev up your routine to reduce stress

By Mayo Clinic staff

Physical activity — whether it's a relaxing walk, bicycle racing or meditative tai chi — helps relieve stress.

By now, you should know that exercise does your body good. But did you also know that virtually any form of exercise can decrease the production of stress hormones and counteract your body's natural stress response? It's true. The same regular exercise routine that helps prevent disease and builds muscle can also help you better manage stress.

How does exercise reduce stress?

Exercise increases your overall health and your sense of well-being, which puts more pep in your steps every day. But exercise also has some direct stress-busting benefits.

It pumps up your endorphins. Physical activity helps to bump up the production of your brain's feel-good neurotransmitters, called endorphins. Although this function is often referred to as a runner's high, a rousing game of tennis or a nature hike also can contribute to this same feeling.

It's meditation in movement. After a fast-paced game of racquetball or several laps in the pool, you'll often find that you've forgotten the day's dilemmas and irritations and concentrated only on your body's movements. As you begin to regularly shed your daily tensions through movement and physical activity, you may find that this focus on a single task, and the resulting energy and optimism, can help you remain calm and clear in everything that you do.

It improves your mood. Regular exercise can increase self-confidence and lower the symptoms associated with mild

depression and anxiety. This can ease your stress levels and give you a sense of command over your body and your life.

How to get started

Every successful exercise program begins with a few simple steps.

Consult with your doctor. Begin any new fitness program by consulting with your health care provider, especially if you have a history of heart disease or other risk factors.

Walk before you run. Build up your fitness level gradually. Excitement about a new program can lead to overdoing it and possibly even injury. Plus, if you begin your program slowly, chances are better you'll stick with it.

Do what you love. Don't train for a marathon if you dislike running. All forms of movement — from horseback riding to swimming — can increase your fitness level while decreasing your stress. The most important thing is to pick an activity that you enjoy.

Pick a time and stick to it. Although your schedule may necessitate morning workouts some days and evening activities the next, carving out some time to move every day helps you make your exercise program an ongoing priority.

Motivation to keep moving

Starting an exercise program is just the first step. Here are some tips for sticking with a new routine or reinvigorating a tired workout:

Set some goals. It's always a good idea to begin or modify a workout program with a goal in mind. If your primary goal is to reduce stress in your life and recharge

your batteries, your specific goals might include committing to walking during your lunch hour three times a week or, if needed, finding a baby sitter to watch your children so that you can slip away to attend a spinning class.

Find a friend. Knowing that someone is waiting for you to show up at the gym or the park can be a powerful incentive. Working out with a friend, co-worker or family member often brings a new level of motivation to your workouts.

Change up your routine. If you've always been a competitive runner, take a look at other less competitive options that may help with stress reduction, such as Pilates classes or yoga. As an added bonus, these kinder, gentler workouts may enhance your running while also decreasing your stress.

Exercise = less stress

Whatever you do, don't think of exercise as just one more thing on your to-do list. Find an activity you enjoy — whether it's an active tennis match or a meditative meander down to a local park and back — and make it part of your regular routine. Any form of physical activity can help you unwind and become an important part of your approach to easing stress.

A gentleman entered a busy florist shop displaying a large sign that read:

Say it With Flowers.

“Wrap up one rose,” he said.

“Only one?” the florist asked.

“Just one,” the customer replied.

“I’m a man of few words.”

Health and Wellness at Collège Lorette Collegiate

submitted by Shayla Patterson (CLC)

At Collège Lorette Collegiate the social and health/wellness committees act as one committee called the social wellness committee. I have been the chair now for two years. There is a committee of 5 teachers who help to purchase gifts and coordinate events. We have a social and health/wellness bulletin board in the staff room where we post information.

The social aspect of the committee recognizes staff members for life changing events (marriage, birth, compassionate, extended illness, departures, retirement, etc.) At Halloween we give out little treat bags. We also encourage staff to dress up and we give prizes to the top three as selected by a group of students.

During the Christmas season, we do Secret Santa with the staff over the course of a week. It is really nice to find a gift in your mail box every day. Each year the staff has a Christmas

party which is always a lot of fun. There is a game we play annually, that involves trying to open wrapped gifts that have been placed within numerous boxes sealed with packing tape. The hard part is that when it is your turn, you have to try and open the gift with oven mitts on your hands. Everyone goes wild and it ends up being the highlight of the night.

We always try to plan a couple of evenings out a year. We have visited restaurants for dinner, and recently we had a get together at Rumours Comedy club to see Roman Danylo. It was great to see everyone laughing and enjoying themselves. Before the end of the year we hope to organize a mini-golf/go-cart racing activity after school.

At the end of the year we have a few different celebrations. We have an outdoor party at one of the staff member's homes. We also have a

barbeque at lunch on the last day of school. There is a traditional get together after school on the last day for all who wish to come.

For health and wellness we offer a healthy lunch on an administration or professional development day. For these days we offer healthy breakfast options as well.

We also have a few health oriented potlucks throughout the year. For staff meetings we take turns bringing a healthy snack to keep the staff going!

Teenager: "Dad, we have a problem with the car- there's water in the engine."

Dad: "Water in the engine? Don't be silly."

Teenager: "I promise you there's water in the engine."

Dad: "How can you tell of there's water in the engine?"

Teenager: "Because the car's in the swimming pool!"

Giggle Power! The Health Benefits of Laughter

submitted by Anita Lessard-Krizak (SAS)

The average adult chuckles 17 times a day, while the average six-year-old laughs 300 times in the same period. For the past few years, scientists have been trying to uncover the physiology of laughter and its probable medical benefits.

In a recent Standford study, researchers showed "Bizarro" comics to people while their brains were monitored by an MRI machine. They proved for the first time that laughter (or at least humour) stimulates the parts of our brain that

use the "feel good" chemical messenger, dopamine. This puts laughter in the category of activities you want to do over and over again, such as eating chocolate! Here are the top ten health reasons to laugh out loud:

It's a natural stress buster! Laughter relaxes the muscles and lowers the heart rate and blood pressure.

It could reduce your risk of heart disease by making your cardiovascular system work better.

(Continued on page 6)

Music to Our Ears submitted by Lisa van den Bussche (SAC)

The iPods, the mp3 players – every day in our schools we battle the war of the wires. But aside from drowning out a teacher’s instructions and inviting permanent hearing loss, the music seeping from these teacher tormentors has also been known to have healing properties (profanity laden, violence promoting ‘artists’ aside!). Volume in check, music can bring a more positive state of mind; keep anxiety at bay, and increase creativity and optimism.

The field of music therapy is growing, and it’s not just an outlet for new age ocean sounds, either. Research has shown that “music with a strong beat can stimulate brainwaves to resonate in sync with the beat, music with faster beats bringing sharper concentration and more alert thinking, and a slower tempo promoting a calm, meditative state” (Scott, 2007). It’s what humans have intuitively known for years: fast beats pump you up and slow tones cool you down.

How can educators use this information? Talk to students about the kinds of music they have in their iPod folders, and encourage them to organize it according to tone or mood. Then, encourage them to access their ‘slow’ music when tension is bubbling and their ‘fast’ music when energy levels are low. Also, for those of us who play music in our classes, select songs according to the rhythm and tempo desired of the classroom environment. When trying to pro-

mote creativity, play music with a strong underlying beat. When trying to promote concentration, play music with a fast beat. And, when trying to smooth frazzled nerves or diffuse tense situation, reach for those calming slow tunes.

But who calms the calmer? Often, we as educators lose sight of our own emotional needs and take on the stressors of others. Find time in your day, even if only during your drive home, to listen to calming music. Aside from the emotional benefits experienced by you and your loved ones (who will be pleasantly surprised that you arrive home without spewing stress), music’s effects on changing brainwave patterns also have physical health benefits. Relaxed brainwave patterns translate to “slower breathing, slower heart rate, and an activation of the relaxation response”, which means that music can help counteract the effects of an anxiety-filled day. Conversely, fast-tempo music will increase creativity and concentration, and is far healthier than a third cup of coffee during a late-night session of marking.

Understandably, music affects the body and mind in powerful ways. Listening to music is one of the easiest, lost-cost, and effective forms of relaxation. And sometimes, the best solutions are the simplest ones.

Source: Scott, Elizabeth. “Music and your Body: How Music Therapy affects us and why Music Therapy promotes Health.” November 1,

École Ste.Anne Immersion Gets Fit In One Minute!

If you were to walk into SAI at 11:40am, you may think a herd of elephants had taken over the school! Well, it is definitely not elephants making that noise. Instead, it’s 200 staff and students running on the spot or doing as many jumping jacks as possible in one minute! In March 2009, the staff and students started EPUM (Exercice Pour Une Minute) in conjunction with Nutrition Month. As soon as the music plays on the intercom at 11:40am, every class participates in one minute of exercise. The students like the activity so much that the staff has decided to continue EPUM until the end of the year. So, if you’re ever walking through SAI and hear what sounds like a stamped, just start jogging...it’s EPUM!!

By Tracy Kirby, SAI



HEALTH & WELLNESS COMMITTEE (Continued from page 1)

compared to 2007. Improvements were found in a number of measures such as job satisfaction, communication, overall support and an overall healthier and safer work climate. There was also evidence of reduced levels of workplace stress.

Results from the survey reaffirmed that the topic of wellness was a regular topic of discussion at each location and that steps taken thus far has helped to improve the overall wellness of employees in Seine River School Division.

As a result of the positive survey results and the fact that many health & wellness practices were becoming engrained in divisional culture, the Divisional Committee did not meet during the 2007/2008 school. Health & Wellness funds continued to be available and used by each site and many of the site-based initiatives listed above were maintained.

Feedback obtained in the 2008/2009 school year suggested

that a revival of the Divisional Health & Wellness Committee was welcome. As such, in late December 2008, an expression of interest was sent out to each of our locations and the divisional committee was re-established. Thus far we have had numerous meetings to discuss how best to advocate, encourage and implement health and wellness initiatives across the division. On April 24, 2009 we invited all site-based Wellness Representatives for an afternoon of fun and brainstorming on how everyone can be involved in their own health & wellness.

The committee is now looking forward to the new school year and are excited to continue to champion health & wellness across the division!



Workplaces *in motion*

submitted by Lisa Yagi

In motion is a provincial strategy to help all Manitobans make physical activity part of their daily lives for health benefits and enjoyment. Many schools have taken advantage of **in motion** initiatives in the past. They are now promoting physical activity in the workplace.

Becoming a Workplace **in motion** and promoting physical activity has many benefits for both the employer and the employees. Any workplace that is ready to encourage employees to build physical activity into their daily routines can register as a Workplace **in motion**!

Once registered as a Workplace **in motion** you will receive:

- The Workplaces **in motion** Resource Manual with ideas and suggestions on how to provide more physical activity opportunities in your workplace opportunities to ap-

ply for a Workplaces **in motion** Physical Activity grant access to great resources on the **in motion** website, like great ideas to get your colleagues "in motion"

- Tips and tools for implementing a physical activity strategy
- Ongoing support and information to help develop an action plan for your workplace
- Fact sheets and practical resource materials
- Information on easy physical activity challenges and activities that you can implement in your workplace
- Updates throughout the year

For further information on how to register your school, call 945-3648 or visit their website at www.manitobainmotion.ca

Reducing Screen Time. Did you know?

According to Statistics Canada 2004 data the average Canadian watches 21.2 hours of TV per week.

- 2-11 year olds watch on average 15.2 hours per week.
- 12- 17 year olds watch 12.7 hours per week.

This time does not include other activities in front of a screen such as playing video games or surfing the internet. Recent studies indicate the relationship between TV viewing and excess body weight begins early in life.



GIGGLE POWER! *(Continued from page 3)*

You'll look younger! Laughter exercises the facial muscles and adds a youthful glow. It's like finding the fountain of youth!

It's good exercise. A log laugh can help strengthen your abdominals and give your heart a workout too.

It keeps depression at bay. A good belly laugh can bring relief to even the darkest spirit.

It can strengthen your immune system. Recent studies prove it.

You'll grow closer to your loved ones. There's nothing like sharing a funny moment to bring everyone closer together.

It's effective pain relief. A good laugh increases the levels of endorphins in the body, which are natural pain killers.

Reduce allergies! It might reduce the severity of allergic reactions. Chuckle your way to self-confidence. It can make you feel more sociable and outgoing!

Stay Active and Eat like a Champion!

From Spring 2009 In Motion Newsletter

Often wonder just how active you should be for health benefits? Start slowly and work your way to 30 - 60 minutes at least 3 times a week. Support your activity by eating well with healthy choices from Canada's Food Guide. You will not only feel better but gain long term health benefits. Always eat a small meal or snack a few hours before any activity program. Choose foods from at least 3 food groups in Canada's Food Guide.

Unless you are very active or exercise for more than 1 hour it is not necessary to refuel or eat immediately after exercising. A quick snack might be a handful of almonds, a glass of milk, or a small pita with hummus. **Note:** People with diabetes may need to eat after exercising for any length of time – check with your doctor or diabetic nurse for more information on exercise and eating.



Water is an excellent choice for fluids especially if exercise lasts 30 – 60 minutes. Only athletes exercising intensely or for long periods of time may find sport drinks or gels beneficial. Vitamin water and enhanced waters are not needed from a vitamin and mineral perspective. Eating balanced food choices from all 4 food groups is a better source for vitamins and minerals.

If you access a computer visit www.dietitians.ca. The Eat Well Live Well section provides fact sheets to Stay Active and Eat like a Champion! This site also provides a question and answer section, a recipe analyzer to help you make changes to recipes and an interactive "Let's Make a Meal".

The health benefits of humour are well known. But how can having a good sense of humour help someone's personal and professional life?

A good sense of humour has a tremendous impact on your personal and professional life. Have you ever noticed the sound of laughter across the room? Most people's reaction is, "I want what they are having!"

Laughter acts as a social lubricant and the glue that helps create effective relationships. Whether in a relationship or single, a sense of humour is a vital tool for everyone's survival kit. Family life brings unavoidable

stresses. But using humour with family can help you cope with difficult situations. Laughter sugar-coats challenging family gatherings or reunions.

The ability to laugh at yourself shows self-confidence and can help pave the way to success at work. Leaders with a great sense of humour set the tone and culture of an organization. Laughter demonstrates accessibility, humanity and a sense of fun.

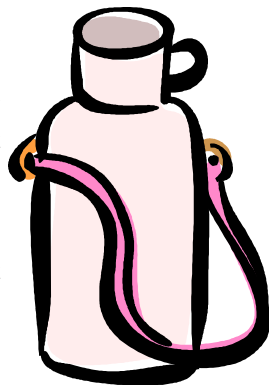
Humour acts as a stress buster and a

source of energy, which can make you more productive and engaged in your work. A good belly laugh brings you to a place where an *a-ha!* moment could bring the creative solution to a business challenge. Make time for fun. It is your greatest asset!

(from the magazine: Living Well, Spring 2008)

Grab Your Water Bottle!

Water bottles may be a trendy thing to carry with you, but did you know it's also part of a healthy lifestyle? Drinking enough fluids during the day keeps you hydrated, which helps keep your body working properly. Water is needed to help digest food, which gives us the energy to work. It's also important to help you stay cool. If you don't drink enough fluids, you can become dehydrated. You might over-heat and have trouble concentrating, which makes it hard to get your work done. Making sure that you drink fluids throughout the day is important both for your job and your health.



What counts as fluids? Water is the best fluid to drink, but milk, juice, and even soup give us fluids too. Drinks that have caffeine in them, like coffee and tea, are also fluids, but having too much caffeine can make it hard to concentrate. You can also get fluids from vegetables and fruit, such as oranges, apples, carrots, celery and tomatoes. Vegetables and fruit also make

great snacks, which makes it easier to add more fluids and add more servings to your day.

Lot's of people think that they need to buy bottled water to get safe water. City tap water is treated to make it clean and safe to drink. Bottled water isn't necessary, and it's expensive and hard on the environment unless you recycle your bottles. Buy a reusable bottle and fill up at the tap instead of buying a bottle. Remember, it's important to wash your bottle every day with soap and water.

Men need about 15 cups (that's 3.7 litres!) of fluids every day, while women need 11 cups (2.7 litres). Try keeping track of how many cups of fluid you have in a day and see if you're getting enough. Fluids are just as important in the winter as they are in the summer to keep your skin from drying out. Don't forget to grab your water bottle on the way out the door!

Reference:
 CBC.ca. (2007). In Depth: Water – What's in a glass of water? Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/water/tapwater.html>
 Dietitians of Canada. (2008). *Why is water so important for my body? How do I know when I'm dehydrated?*

2009 Trends in Physical Activity

Trends are something that can be seen in every industry. Physical activity trends can be seen every year. For the last three years, the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) publishes a survey in the November/December issue of ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal that lists the top 20 trends.

The top 10 fitness trends predicted for 2009 are listed here:

1. *Educated and experienced fitness professionals*—This is most likely due to increased industry regulations and an increase of specialty certifications and educational programs available for these professionals.

2. *Children and obesity*—Designing physical activity programs to reverse it – is high in the minds of fitness profes-

sionals not only because of the number of children who are currently overweight and obese, but because addressing obesity in children addresses obesity in adults.

3. *Personal training*—People are demanding educated, trained and properly certified fitness professionals who are providing advice to them.

4. *Strength training*—Strength training is an essential part of Health Canada's Physical Activity Guidelines. Strength training is needed to maintain bone mass density with aging and is used in a variety of rehabilitation settings.

5. *Core training*—This type of training is specific to conditioning the back and abdomen muscles and improves spine stability.

6. *Special fitness programs for older adults*—With an aging population health and fitness professionals are designing age-appropriate programs to specific to older adults.

7. *Pilates*—Pilates incorporates a great deal of core training, while still strengthening and toning the entire body. Part of its appeal is that many exercises can be done with a simple mat. No expensive equipment is required.



8. *Stability ball*—Because the size of stability balls varies so greatly, many different exercises can be performed with them. It teaches balance and strength in addition to stability.

9. *Sport-specific training*—This trend distinctly relates to athletes by using movements similar to their sports when training to optimize performance.

10. *Balance training*—Numerous activities feature balance training, including yoga, foam rollers, BOSU balls, and more.

The full list (Top 20 trends) is available in the article "Worldwide Survey Reveals Fitness Trends for 2009." It can be found on the ACSM's web-site (acsm.org).

Is the Family TV changing your Grocery List?

Are your children adding special requests to your grocery list? Children, 2- 15, are good at persuading parents to buy foods they see on commercials. Manufacturers use commercials to promote new products often with the help of popular TV characters like Sponge Bob Square Pants, Spider Man or Winnie the Pooh.

Here's what's on TV:

- Food makes up 50% of all ads on children's programs
- Fast foods, candy and pre-sweetened cereals are the most common foods advertised
- These foods are high in calories, fat, sugar and salt and provide fewer nutrients children need including protein, vitamins, minerals and fiber
- Only 4% of food advertisements are for healthy foods whole grains, vegetables and fruit or milk

Here's what it means for your family:

- Preschoolers who watch TV while eating may tend to eat more and become less sensitive to knowing when they feel full
- The more TV children watch the higher their risk for high blood cholesterol levels
- Youth who watch TV 4 hours a day are 2 ½ times more likely to be obese

Your grocery list should include foods your children like to eat. Talk about the foods on commercials do they fit within Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating? Be a role model and fill the fridge and cupboards with healthy snacks.

DID YOU KNOW....

A recent study found that dog owners spent more time in mild and moderate physical activities and walked on average 300 minutes per week. In contrast, non-dog owners walked on average 168 minutes per week!

