



Personal Wellness

Mind, Body, Spirit

by Pamela Aloia and Michael Aloia

In the previous Personal Wellness article installment, we introduced the concept of mind development and care as the first of three articles dedicated to the mind-body-spirit balance and interconnectivity of our overall wellness health. The importance of recognizing the mind's potential, challenging the mind's limits and nurturing the mind's evolution was covered. In this article, the health of the body will be our focus of discussion.

We are all aware that the benefits of a healthy lifestyle are plentiful and proven to provide a vibrant and fulfilling life. Enough information has been presented to the public's attention over the last several decades that it seems improbable that society would still choose to risk their personal well-being with choices that would be less than advantageous. Our media continues to flood our senses with new health products to try and exercise methods to integrate into our

daily or weekly routine.

The quests for a pleasing physique or feeling good, alert, and fit, are all incentives that keep some of us investigating and considering new ways of healthy living. For some of us, we become overwhelmed and unmotivated with where to start and flounder our way through, or at worst, choose to do nothing. Our choices, our bodies, the way our bodies feel and the way we feel about our bodies, are a direct reflection of the care, or lack thereof, that we provide them on a regular basis.

Some liken the body to a temple, for it is the house in which each of us resides for our lifetime. How we choose to live that lifetime depends on the choices made throughout that duration. These choices are made on a daily basis. The body makes living possible in the present physical world. Without it, all activity - exercise and sports, attending family gatherings, going

to work, playing with our children, walking in the park with a pet or enjoying a sunrise - would not be possible. The body requires attention, maintenance and good old fashion tender, love and care.

We don't need to be a doctor or scientist, sports hero or fitness guru to make a healthy lifestyle a reality. What is required, however, is the self-discipline, responsibility and consistency to care for our bodies. Decades ago the adage 'garbage in, garbage out' became the means of describing a nation that was edging towards obesity and malnutrition. It demonstrated that convenience can lead to carelessness - where too much opportunity can lead to overindulgence.

This adage still holds true today. Ironically, the media has played a dual role in the education and confusion of our world's ability to get the facts straight and make smart choices. On one hand we preach the benefits of

health, fitness, a balanced diet and nutrition. Yet, on the other, mass campaigns are launched to promote and propagate fast food, fad diets, substance dependency and quick-fix weight solutions. These ads have only served to create more questions with unclear answers.

In the most basic of terms, what we put into our bodies with regard to high nutrition or low nutrition, substance or care, is truly what we reap. If our diet is unable to sustain the necessary nutritional and energy levels to perform our daily tasks then the body will most certainly not withstand moments of high intensity and durations of employed stress related to activity and/or profession, with any amount of grace and composure. Adequate fuel equals adequate results. Optimal fuel produces optimal results. The better the in, most definitely, the better the out.

We can all imagine, by our own standards, a

perfect world - one where illness, disease and ailments are non-existent. A life that is healthy, happy, prosperous and peaceful. In essence, this sort of reality does exist and it is achievable. This reality, however, needs to be selected and chosen, and then, worked towards diligently. It is a life choice.

Healthy body choices are not found in a box, a pill or a television ad, but rather in time, attention and care. If your lifestyle already involves and revolves around making smart and healthy choices, then you are aware of the initial effort and regular maintenance it takes to be successful. Yet you also already realize how these choices increase the quality of life with beneficial results on not only your physical health, but your emotional and mental outlook as well. For those who have yet to make the leap to a better body tomorrow, there is no time like the present.

Consider for a moment your daily routine. Do you find what would be considered common, daily activity such as getting dressed, tying your shoes or walking a flight of stairs, to be a bit of a struggle? Does carrying a litter, transporting emergency gear or getting to the ground and back up again to aid

a victim feel cumbersome? If so and barring no physical implications, you may need to re-evaluate your fitness level and your current health status. This is not to say you may be unhealthy, it just demonstrates a need for reassessment and possible improvement.

Long and grueling shifts packed with countless calls can range from a courteous shuttle service from residence to local hospital to a multiple victim calamity. Time spent during a routine series of shifts can be depleting. Energy levels will most certainly decrease without proper rest and replenishing. Time in is time spent regardless of the intensity level of the activity. Our bodies crave a balance of proper nutrition, adequate exercise and sufficient rest to meet the demands of the day. Once we learn how to meet the body's needs, meeting the needs of the day becomes a whole lot easier.

Drastic changes to our routine can prove difficult to adhere to and potentially shock our system. Making small changes in our daily meal plan/choices and regular fitness regimen is a great place to start. Exchanging a bag of chips for pretzels decreases our fat intake. Swapping out the pretzels for a piece of fruit provides us more

carbohydrates for energy. Ingesting a handful of almonds instead of a candy bar provides a healthy dose of good fat and protein to boot.

Adding small increments of cardiovascular exercise and resistance training will help burn additional unwanted fats and build muscle tone while improving both our strength and appearance. When we tailor exercise with a sensible and balanced diet – ample proportional amounts of carbohydrates, fats and proteins to fuel and repair muscles - along with proper hydration with water - our bodies respond with greater endurance and flexibility, and our mental self perceptions shift as well. With the addition of ample rest and sleep, this balanced combination results in stable and consistent performance – one void of the extreme highs and lows.

While it may take some trial and error in the beginning to find out what combination works best for us, making the first step of exploration is key. Work shifts can swing from the intense to the routine, on any given day and at any given moment. Just because our work shifts may swing from the highs and lows does not mean that the body needs to follow the same path. The body

should be up to the task. Through nurturing and treating our bodies with care and awareness, our bodies will learn what feels good and what doesn't and what it responds to versus what it doesn't.

With such a wealth of and easy access to the health, fitness and wellness industries, we all are somewhat or innately familiar with the “shoulds” of a healthy lifestyle. If we turn the “shoulds” into “coulds,” they become opportunities and choices rather than obligations. With the choice of and awareness on an overall increased health wellness mindset, we can shape the success rate of all our physical goals. ♦

Authors

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