



Taste the difference... - By Joe Kita

Exercise makes everything better – including the flavor of life

A cup of dirty ice

A handful of melted Gummi Bears

A ham-and-cheese sandwich in a microwavable bag

A glass of warm Coke

A badly bruised banana

A packet of vanilla GU

These are some of the best things I've eaten. In fact, if I close my eyes and think about each one, I can still remember exactly where I was and how delicious it tasted. That cup of ice, for instance, was handed to me at an aid station 4 miles from the finish of an Olympic-distance triathlon on a 90-degree July day. Up until that point, I'd only had warm water and Gatorade, but this, my God, was treasure.

I spotted that ham-and-cheese sandwich in a rest-stop vending machine off a highway near Westport, Ireland. My 9-year-old son and I had been pedaling our tandem all day in the rain. We were cold and hungry. We listened as our last coins clattered into the cashbox, watched as that sandwich fell from its A3 perch, waited as the microwave worked its 6-second magic, then split it exactly even and let the cheese seep into our mouths.

So it is with everything else on my list. Ordinary stuff that's either gulped down or refused entirely under normal conditions becomes an unforgettable gourmet treat when seasoned with physical exercise.

Everyone knows that exercise strengthens the heart and lungs and muscles, but did you also realize that it conditions your taste buds and, more broadly (and importantly), your appetite for life?

There's an interesting physiological reason for this. Ninety percent of what we think is taste is actually smell. Try holding your nose

the next time you take a bite of anything, and you'll experience this firsthand. As your body heats up during exercise, your sense of smell becomes more acute. Increased air and blood-flow through the nose, combined with the release of endorphins and the uptick in your arousal system, all serve to further enhance your sense of smell. So when you eat or drink something during or immediately after strenuous exercise, it taste better.

That's the physical part. But after many years of workouts, I've come to believe there's a similar psychological effect. It's not just food and drink you come to savor, but also conversation, people, and the surrounding environment. I'm the 47-year-old son of a stalwart marine, yet I cried running up Fifth Avenue during the New York City Marathon, and I've told things to buddies on bike rides that I'd never think of broaching with my wife. It's as if molecules in your brain and your heart, along with those in your nose, dilate and become more sensitive, too. You feel more intensely, you appreciate more deeply, you listen more closely, you taste life in the pure, organic way it was meant to be served.

This is why I exercise. This is why I'm in the pool at 7 a.m. or at the gym on weekend mornings while almost everyone else is sleeping. This is why I prefer to take my family on bike tours rather than to Disney World. This is why my wife and I go for a walk when we have something important to discuss. Activity brings awareness. Start moving the body, and the soul will follow.

You've probably heard the term "target heart rate." If you're serious about exercise and want to train most effectively, this is the heart rate you should aim for. It's your engine's optimal rpm. But what if we redefined the concept? Instead of aiming for our physical target heart-rate zones and counting off beats per minute, what if we focused instead on our emotional target heart-rate zones and tracked our connections per minute – the number of times we really notice or experience what's around us?

After all, it's not just getting back in shape that we need, it's getting back in touch.

Care for a cheesy ham sandwich?

Source: You24. Used with permission.



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Back and knees: preventing injuries

Question

When I was younger, I was a real running enthusiast. I gave up running partly because I would often hear that running was not recommended due to the impact it had on the knees and back. I am 47 years old. I suffer from some back pain but I dream of being able to once again take up running for the great benefits I used to get from it. What are the true negative long-term impacts from running on account of the repetitive shock on the knees and back?

Martin Rivest

Answer

Running is accessible to most people. It's a simple and effective way to stay in shape and be able to achieve goals previously considered unattainable. That being said, it is important to take certain precautions. Don't forget that it is an impact sport. If our joints are healthy, if our shoes are in good condition and if everything is done in the proper order, running does not pose a problem. The wear and tear on the knees and back pain specifically caused by running is nevertheless quite infrequent.

Some people are often prone to injury even before embarking on a running program.

Starting off on the right foot

If you suffer from back pain or other types of pain, it is preferable to first address this problem before starting to run. You can consult a physician, a physiotherapist, a chiropractor or an osteopath. If you run while injured, sooner or later you will have to stop.

Mirror, mirror on the wall

Often people only train the muscles they can see – this is known as the “mirror syndrome.” However, problems often occur behind the thighs, in the lower back, in the upper back, and in the nape. You should therefore opt for a complete bodybuilding program that targets the necessary and complementary body parts for the specific activity. In addition to reducing the risk of injury, bodybuilding improves running efficiency by 10 to 20%. That's huge.

A question of style

When we adopt a good running style, we minimize the risk of injury. More and more, specialists analyze our running patterns on video. They observe what we do well and what needs to be corrected in terms of movement, foot positioning on the ground, etc.

Garage league syndrome

While it's not good to do too much, doing too little isn't a better alternative. Are you familiar with the garage league syndrome? You know, a bunch of guys, who are otherwise pretty much sedentary, play hockey once a week. The body is therefore not prepared to handle this intense exertion. Risks include pulled muscles, sprains, even cardiac accidents. You need to maintain consistency in your training regimen, keep a balance and listen to your body. This applies to running as it does to other sports.

The importance of planning

We need to start gradually to set up solid foundations and to strengthen the joints, tendons and muscles. Afterwards, we can work on intensity and speed. It is important to properly distribute the training between intensity, duration and frequency. The recovery phases are an integral part of the training. Ideally, we should plan our year based on the running calendar or our goals. Better yet: we should seek help from professionals who, by using tests, will create a personalized training program to ensure continuous progression.

Steve Prud'homme and Caroline Brunet are Training Specialists at Peak Centre for Human Performance at the Mansfield Athletic Club in Montreal



Obesity May Reduce Brain Gray Matter In Postmenopausal Women

Results from a small study of postmenopausal women suggest that obesity might relate to a reduced volume of gray matter in the brain. However, whether the results have relevance in a woman's day-to-day life is unclear.

"A subset of women from the Pittsburgh Healthy Women Study (HWS) who had been followed for an average of 15 years was invited to participate in brain imaging studies," said lead author Isabella Soreca, M.D., an assistant professor at the University of Pittsburgh. "We



found that those who had gained the most weight had lower gray matter volume."

The study appears online in the journal *Psychosomatic Medicine: Journal of Biobehavioral Medicine*.

Forty-eight women participants underwent MRIs to determine the volume of both white and gray matter in their brains. Researchers excluded participants from the study if their white matter showed specific signs of possible decreases in blood supply to the brain. They also excluded participants if they had high blood pressure, diabetes or other health concerns.

"Women who gain weight tend to have high blood pressure, impaired glucose tolerance and other health concerns that are known to affect the brain," Soreca said. "The group we used were overweight, but were otherwise completely healthy. It was surprising that these healthy women still showed reductions

in gray matter volume, and this indicates that weight gain by itself may impact the brain."

Charles D. Smith, M.D., a professor of neurology at the University of Kentucky in Lexington, said that although the study results are interesting for researchers, for now they are only likely to add confusion for a public concerned about weight and nutrition.

"There was no evidence presented that decreased gray matter in these healthy subjects represented atrophy, or that decreased gray matter was associated with diminished memory, judgment or daily function or with any impairment at all," Smith said. "Some heavier folks had had decreased gray matter so what? There are plenty of good health reasons to maintain an appropriate weight, but this isn't one of them."

Source: Health Behavior News Service

Being Overweight Is A Health Concern, BMI Is Only Part Of The Story

Being overweight is a health concern, but Body Mass Index doesn't tell the whole story because it is part of a larger picture, says a new advisory by the American Heart Association published this month.

Lead author Dr Cora E. Lewis, professor of medicine and public health at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, said that:

"This larger picture includes important relationships between BMI and other health outcomes, such as cardiovascular disease and its risk factors."

"Arguably, the most important relationship among the cardiovascular disease risk factors is diabetes, which is significantly more common in overweight than in normal-weight people," she added.

The advisory is published in the 8 June online issue of *Circulation*, the Journal of the American Heart Association.

Many studies looking at the relationship between Body Mass Index (BMI, the ratio of a person's weight in kilos to the square of their height in metres) and risk of death from all causes (total mortality) contradict each other. The authors argue that looking only at death from all causes overlooks the important part that being overweight might play in the development of cardiovascular disease risk.

And BMI is not enough to tell the whole story. An assessment of a person's health risk due to being overweight should also take into account the amount of lean mass or muscle, which reduces health risk, and where the fat is distributed on the body, for instance around the waist presents higher risk than around the hips.

Lewis and colleagues concluded that: Being overweight increases the risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and other health conditions.

Being overweight usually precedes being obese, so everyone who is overweight, adults and children alike, should reduce weight by changing to a healthy diet and doing more exercise.

More research is needed on the links between overweight and health and this should go beyond looking only at BMI and risk of death.

But the authors also warned that: "Meanwhile, we cannot afford to wait for this research to begin addressing the problem of overweight in our patients and in our society."

"Both healthy eating patterns and physical activity have roles in managing weight and CVD risk and should be encouraged in all," they wrote, explaining that gaining weight is progressive while losing weight is very hard to manage.

About one-third of Americans are overweight, which in BMI terms sits between normal and

obese, ranging from BMI of 25.0 to 29.9. Also, the number of overweight children is going up, and overweight children usually turn into overweight and obese adults, said the authors.

Even among children, being overweight is linked to higher risk of developing risk factors for cardiovascular disease, such as obesity, high blood pressure, obesity, higher levels of cholesterol and type 2 diabetes, they warned.

Lewis and colleagues also said it was also important that health professionals:

"Consider the overall risk status of patients regardless of BMI, with the realization that those with [cardiovascular disease] risk factors such as type 2 diabetes mellitus and systemic hypertension are at particularly increased risk from excess weight and may well benefit from weight loss intervention as part of their treatment."



Sweet Swaps

Satisfy your sweet tooth with these smart substitutions

Sometimes you cave in to your cravings for something sweet. Don't beat yourself up. Feeding your sweet tooth doesn't have to bust your diet or blow out your waistline.

By swapping out some of your favorite sugar-laden treats for some tasty lower-calorie options, you can give in without totally giving up.

Before your weak moment, have some of these alternatives handy:

Ditch: Ice cream

Grab: Sorbet

Reason: Ice cream is dense with calories and fat, but especially in the summer, a cool, refreshing treat is the most satisfying option. Sorbet gives you the same frozen taste as ice cream without all the fat, plus you'll save from 160 calories up to a whopping 560 calories per cup.

Ditch: Cookies

Grab: Biscotti

Reason: Cookies are for monsters and kids. Try dipping biscotti in your coffee instead of an Oreo in milk. Generally, one piece of biscotti



has just about 125 to 150 calories. Of course, a fistful of cookies can easily quadruple that calories count.

Ditch: Birthday cake

Grab: Angel food cake

Reason: Sure, you need to have something to put the candles in, but traditional birthday cake is packed with fat, sugar, and calories. There can be more than 300 calories in even a small sliver of cake. Make your wish come true with lighter, fluffier angel food cake, which has about 120 calories in a more generous slice.

Ditch: Milk chocolate bar

Grab: Strawberries dipped in dark chocolate

Reason: Chocolate cravings may be the strongest pull on that sweet tooth, but a big bite of the typical milk chocolate bar tops 200 calories. Compare that to a cup of strawberries at only 50 calories, a drizzling of darker chocolate also contains antioxidants.

Source: You24. Used with permission.

Acupuncture and ... constipation

The main function of the "large intestine" is to absorb water from food residues and transform them into feces. The colon's mucous membrane secretes a mucous that lubricates the inside of the large intestine to facilitate its evacuation function. The "large intestine" is therefore responsible for the final phase of the digestive processes.

** Describes the "System of the large intestine" based on traditional Chinese medicine and not only the large intestine as such.

Constipation refers to a difficulty or impossibility to evacuate fecal matter, which stays in the large intestine for a more or less extended period of time. The frequency of our bowel movements should be more or less once to twice a day.

According to traditional Chinese medicine, there are two possible types of imbalance that can lead to constipation, namely, constipation due to excess patterns of disharmony and constipation due to deficiency patterns of disharmony. For each of these two types of constipation, the symptoms differ as do the triggering factors.

Constipation due to excess patterns of disharmony

The frequency consists of one bowel movement every three to five days, and defecation is difficult.

This imbalance is explained by poor processing of fecal matter that ends up forming a kind of plug. This plug comes from decreased liquid in the feces. This decrease is produced from overheating inside the body, resulting in body dehydration.

This condition is caused by excessively spicy or hot food (generally included in this category are tonifying or stimulating foods that heat the body or accelerate its metabolic functions, such as certain red meats, chocolate, etc.) or excessive exposure to outside heat, which also decreases the liquids in the body. Symptoms include the sensation of bodily heat, redness in the face, thirst, a desire for cold beverages, and bad breath.

Emotional disorders can also cause the feces to form a sort of plug, leading to stomach pain, frequent passing of gas, loss of appetite and internal tension.

Constipation due to deficiency patterns of disharmony

The frequency consists of bowel movements

every two days or more, defecation is easier, and bowel movements are smaller.

This imbalance stems from the body's difficulty to eliminate fecal matter considered normal, which is explained by a general decline in the body's energy. Stools are normal, but when the intestine has to push along fecal matter for excretion purposes, the peristalsis movement is slowed down and bowel movements remain in transit for longer periods. This type of constipation frequently occurs after long illnesses, extreme exhaustion, childbirth, and also tends to strike older people. Symptoms often include a dull complexion, pale nails, mental fatigue, a cold sensation, abdominal discomfort and a longing for warmth.

Role of acupuncture

Acupuncture restores hydration in the stools in the case of constipation due to excess patterns of disharmony and eases intestinal transit in the case of constipation due to deficiency patterns of disharmony. Treatments are coupled with nutrition and lifestyle advice, which enables people who are suffering from such types of constipation to prevent the imbalance from recurring.

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