



Positive Pulse Wellness Newsletter

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"Promote and protect the wellness of our community through education, programs, and services".

The Benefits of Squat Exercises

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Why are squat exercises so beneficial? Squat exercises are great for a total lower body workout. They effectively work most of the major muscle groups of the butt, hips, and thighs.

Squats are also a versatile exercise. They can be done in almost any location, with or without the use of weights or equipment. Best of all, they are free!!!

Squats tone the legs by thoroughly engaging the quadriceps, hamstrings, and calf muscles. Slowing the motion down makes the workout that much more intense.

Squats lifts the butt. Doing squats give the glutes a pow-

erful workout, helping to tighten and lift the butt. To increase this effect, give your glutes an extra squeeze when returning to a standing position.

Squats strengthens the core by engaging the core muscles of the body. Abdominal and back muscles are needed to keep balance during the movement. The result is a tighter, flatter abdomen and a stronger lower back. Make a conscious effort to hold in your abdominal muscles while squatting down to increase the effect.



How to Do a Common Squat Exercise:

1. Stand with your feet hip width apart.
2. Tighten and pull in your abdominal muscles.
3. Lower your body as if you were going to sit in a chair. Keep motion slow.
4. Stop when your legs are parallel to the floor.
5. Stay in position for a few seconds.
6. Press down your heels and slowly rise back up to a standing position.

Special points of interest:

* June 2015 Monthly Challenge Options: Complete the 30 Day Squat Challenge, either "Beginner" or "Advanced"; Eliminate fast-food eating for the entire month of June 2015.

4 Workouts to Help Improve Mental Health

There are many types of exercises that improve mental health. A regular exercise regimen will reduce your stress, lift your mood, improve your self-esteem, and help you sleep better. For the fitness activity to pro-

duce these results, it needs to be aerobic in nature. You want to exercise in ways that pump up your heart rate and challenge your body.

4 Workouts to Help Improve Mental Health:

1. Aerobic Activity: Research shows that aerobic exercise has anti-depressant effect on the body. When you elevate your heart rate

4 Workouts to Help Improve Mental Health (continued)

and increase your blood circulation, you will experience an increase in endorphins. Endorphins numb pain and improve your mood. To get these benefits, engage in aerobic exercise that you can sustain for a minimum of 30 minutes several times per week. A few options include aerobics classes, cycling, running, hip-hop classes, or hiking.

2. Outdoor Exercise: Outdoor fitness activities are known to reduce stress and improve your sense of well-being.



Exercising in fresh air and being exposed to beautiful sights and scents has shown to be healthy for both the mind and body. When you exercise in a clean outdoor environment, your lungs breathe in fresh air, cleansing your body of impurities. Your mind tends to let go of its usual worries and focus more on the beauty of your surroundings. Riding your bike through a scenic spot or jogging by a lake or body of water are examples of ways to gain the mental health benefits of out-

door exercise.

3. Swimming: Whether you do it indoors or outdoors, swimming has a positive effect on both the body and the mind. It is relaxing for your muscles. The rhythmic element of swimming and moving through the water is calming for the mind.

4. Exercising with Others: Sometimes just the act of getting together with a friend to chat can eliminate your stress and reduce your worries. You can support one another emotionally.

The Effects of Fast Food On the Body

Food is fuel for your body and has a direct impact on how you feel as well as on your overall health. Fast food refers to food that can be served quickly. In many cases, that means food that is highly processed and contains large amounts of carbohydrates, added sugar, unhealthy fats, and salt. The foods generally contain a high number of calories but offer little or no nutritional

value. Eating out adds between 160-310 extra calories per day according to a study by JAMA Pediatrics in 2013. One fast food meal can give you an entire days worth of calories. This can really

"There are 530 calories in one Big Mac from McDonalds".
~McDonalds.com~

pack on the pounds!

When fast food frequently replaces nutritious foods in your diet, it can lead to poor nutrition and poor health.

Digestive and Cardiovascular Systems:

Many fast foods and drinks are loaded with carbohydrates and, consequently, a lot of calories. When a person takes in high amounts of carbs, it causes a spike

in your blood sugar. That can alter the normal insulin response. Frequent spikes in blood sugar may be a contributing factor in insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes.

According to the American Heart Association, most Americans take in twice as many sugars as is recommended for optimal health. All those extra calories add up to extra weight, a contributing factor in insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes.

Too much sodium helps to retain water

so it can cause general bloating and puffiness. Sodium can contribute to high blood pressure or enlarges heart muscle. Excess sodium may also increase risk for kidney stones, kidney disease, and stomach cancer.

Obesity is associated with an increase in respiratory problems and treating those ailments may be more complicated.

A recent study published in the journal *Thorax* suggests that children who eat fast food at least three times a week

are at an increased risk of asthma and rhinitis.

Central Nervous System:

There are many types of headache and many things that can cause them. Some dietary triggers that can be found in fast food include salt, processed meats, nitrates, and MSG.

A study published in the journal *Public Health Nutrition* showed that eating commercial baked goods and fast food may be linked to depression. People who eat fast food are 51% more likely to

The Effects of Fast Food On the Body (continued)

develop depression than those who eat little to no fast food.

Skin and Bones:

According to the May Clinic, because foods that are high in carbohydrates increase blood sugar levels, they may also trigger acne.

The *Thorax Study* showed a higher risk of eczema among children with a diet high in fast food.

When you consume foods high in carbs and sugar, bacteria residing in your

mouth produce acids. Those acids are hard on your teeth. In fact, they can destroy tooth enamel, a contributing factor in dental cavities. When the enamel of your tooth is lost, it can't be replaced. Poor oral health has also been linked to other health problems.

Excess sodium may also increase your risk of developing osteoporosis.



Brandi's "Clean Eating" Recipe of the Month

Baked Zucchini Sticks:

Ingredients:

- 3 medium zucchini sliced into sticks
- 1 large egg white
- 1/3 cup seasoned whole wheat bread crumbs
- 2 tbsp grated Romano cheese

- Cooking spray
- 1/4 tsp garlic powder
- Salt
- Fresh pepper

Directions:

In a small bowl, beat egg whites and season with salt and pepper. In a zip lock bag, place breadcrumbs, garlic pow-

der and cheese and shake well. Spray cookie sheet with cooking spray and set aside.

Dip zucchini sticks into eggs then into bread crumb and cheese mixture. Set on cookie sheet and spray more cooking spray on top. Bake at 425 degrees for about 20-25 minutes, or until golden brown. Enjoy!!!

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