

Low-Impact Exercise

Running and jogging are popular ways to exercise. But for people with knee or back problems or certain other medical issues, low-impact activities may be a better choice. Low-impact exercise can help you become physically fit without stressing your joints and bones.



There's a wide selection of activities to choose from. Whether you prefer the indoors or outdoors, and solo or group workouts, there's something for everyone. *Here's how to add some variety and fun:*

Outdoor options include walking, swimming, rowing and biking. Improve your health and enjoy the scenery at the same time.

Group activities are ideal if you enjoy exercising with others. Look for classes in Pilates, yoga, water or step aerobics, spinning, or belly dancing.

Solo indoor exercise on a variety of fitness machines will give you a hearty cardio workout. *Ideas:* stationary bikes and elliptical, cross-training, treadmill (for walking), rowing and stair-stepper machines. You can use these machines at the gym or buy them for use at home.

Benefits: These activities will improve your overall fitness, energy level and heart health if you do them vigorously at least three times a week for 20 minutes or at a moderate pace for 30 minutes five times a week. You may also see other improvements such as weight loss, muscle toning, reduced blood pressure and less back pain.

Check with your health care provider before making major changes in your exercise routine, especially if you have physical limitations. Then pick your favorite exercise and start enjoying the benefits.

“Don't cry because it's over.
 Smile because it happened.” — Dr. Seuss

DR. ZORBA'S LONGEVITY CORNER

DIABETES PREVENTION: WHAT TO EAT

According to a recent study from the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, you will raise your chances of developing type 2 diabetes if you eat a lot of foods rated high on the glycemic index — that is, foods that raise your blood sugar quickly. Examples include white bread, candy, canned fruit in syrup and refined cereals. You can reduce your risk by eating foods rated lower on the glycemic index, such as whole-grain breads and cereals, beans, low-fat dairy products, and fresh fruit. A simple change, such as switching from white bread to whole wheat or replacing canned fruit with fresh fruit, can help keep diabetes at bay.

Arthritis and Your Diet

Can food choices decrease your risk of developing arthritis or diminish the symptoms? There are several types of arthritis, so the role of diet in this disease is complex. *Here's a rundown of the latest information:*

Diet appears to affect gout (a form of arthritis). Studies suggest that foods high in purines, such as liver, mackerel and scallops, can aggravate gout in some people, as can drinking too much alcohol.

Some foods may help reduce the inflammation of arthritis. There is a strong possibility that omega-3 fatty acids can help arthritis sufferers. Have two three-ounce servings weekly of tuna, salmon or trout, or add flax oil or ground flaxseed to salad dressings or other foods. Spices such as ginger and turmeric show promise as well.

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Laugh Yourself Happy

If you need a quick pick-me-up, maybe humor can do the trick. Laughter appears to reduce depression, improve mood, and even help people cope with pain and illness. Not a natural-born comic? No problem. *Here are some tips to keep you moving at 60 smiles per hour:*

- ☉ Keep a “humor journal” or scrapbook: every day, write down something funny that you heard, saw or did. Re-read your journal when you need a boost.
- ☉ Post funny (but tasteful) quotes or cartoons on your refrigerator, mirror, locker or bulletin board.
- ☉ Record your favorite television comedies and watch them with your family. Listen to recorded comedy routines while doing household chores.
- ☉ Establish a joke exchange with a friend: write down any good jokes you hear and swap them by phone or email.
- ☉ Stuck on an embarrassing mistake you made? Try to find a humorous side to it, and share it with others.

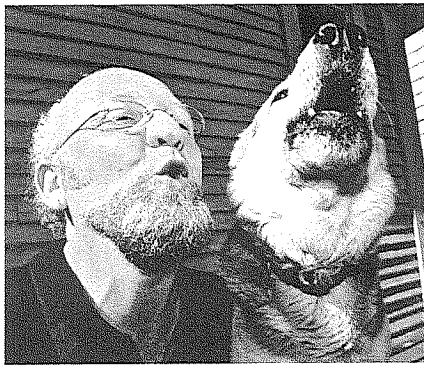
Laughter is the best medicine, so be sure to get your daily dose of humor.

REAL MEN NEED SUPPORT

Men who are the “strong, silent type” may be in for a surprise: Those who turn to others for support live longer. For example, married men live longer than unmarried men, and social support increases the chances of surviving stressful life events.

So if you want to improve your overall health — or just make a few more friends — consider some of these options:

- 1 Join a group that shares your interests. From bowling leagues to book clubs, you're sure to find one that appeals to you.
- 2 Get to know your coworkers better. Sit down for lunch together.
- 3 Spend more time with your family. Make weekend plans in advance to be sure everyone will be available.
- 4 Volunteer for a worthy cause — anything from assisting at a senior center to helping at a science museum.
- 5 Join an exercise class, or start a walking or running group at work.
- 6 Find a support group that meets your needs, whether you're trying to stop smoking or grieving the loss of a loved one.



- 7 Consider adopting an animal, because the companionship of a pet can enhance your health. If you already have a dog, take it for a walk to a popular park or trail. With a four-legged companion at your side, you'll also find it easier to start conversations with others.
- 8 Find a religious or spiritual community where you're comfortable, and introduce yourself to other members.
- 9 Talk with a counselor if needed; your health care provider or employee assistance program can help you find a qualified professional.

There's no need to handle everything by yourself — even the Lone Ranger had Tonto.

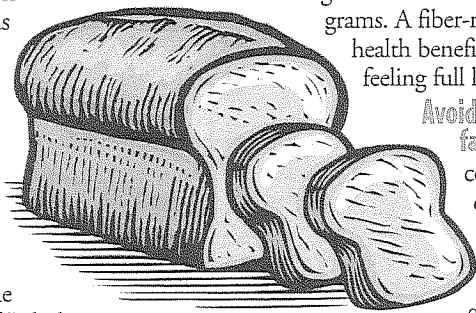
Which Bread Is Best?

When you wander down the bread aisle of any grocery store, you have dozens of choices. So how does the health-conscious consumer pick the best bread? These simple guidelines can help.

Choose whole grain. Look for bread called “100% whole wheat,” or check the ingredients to see if “whole-wheat” or other “whole-grain” flour is the first ingredient (meaning it's the largest ingredient by weight). Whole grains include oats, brown rice, bulgur, corn and rye. “Wheat bread” and “multigrain bread” are not always whole-grain.

Get your fiber. The American Dietetic Association recommends 30 to 38 grams a day for men and 21 to 25 grams for

women. A slice of whole-wheat bread contains 2 to 5 grams of fiber, while an average slice of white bread has only 0.6 grams. A fiber-rich diet has several health benefits and keeps you feeling full longer.



Avoid breads with “bad” fats. Trans fat can contribute to heart disease, so avoid it whenever you can. Look for “trans fat free” on the label or 0 grams of trans fat on

the Nutrition Facts panel.

Consider the salt and sugar content. If you have high blood pressure or diabetes, look for sodium and sugar amounts on the Nutrition Facts panel.

Whole grains are also available in items such as tortillas, pita bread and bagels. Try a few products to find the ones that are both delicious *and* nutritious.

CALORIE FACTS If you're watching your calories, here's a quick explanation of some common food product terms:

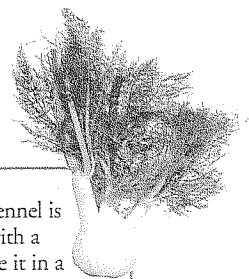
- **“Calorie-free”** The product has fewer than 5 calories per serving.
- **“Low-calorie”** Each serving contains 40 calories or less.
- **“Reduced” or “fewer” calories** The product has at least 25 percent fewer calories than the standard version.
- **“Light” or “lite”** The product contains at least one-third fewer calories or 50 percent less fat than the standard version.



Arthritis ... (continued)

Arthritis-fighting antioxidants occur in a variety of fruits and vegetables, including red peppers, pumpkins and apricots; just one glass of orange juice a day may make a difference. Coffee, low-fat dairy products and vitamin C (found in citrus fruits) have also been linked to lower rates of gout. Limit foods high in saturated fats; go easy on refined grains and sugar; and avoid trans fats — they may worsen inflammation.

Take-home message: Although more research is needed to identify which foods truly fight arthritis, you can take a positive step now. Keep a log of your food and your symptoms to see if you can spot any patterns. Then consult your health care provider or check out www.arthritis.org for more information.



FLAVOR IT WITH FENNEL Fennel is a green and white vegetable with a subtle licorice flavor. Chefs use it in a variety of ways to bring out the true flavor of food. Thinly sliced, it's a tasty addition to salads. Grilled, roasted or sauteed fennel has a mellow flavor and makes a delicious side dish. The feather-like fronds on the top of the plant can also be chopped and used as an herb, like parsley or dill. **Idea:** Try some fennel the next time you're looking to add a fresh twist to your cooking.

NEXT MONTH: Revitalize Your Body