

STEPS



If gyms aren't your thing there are plenty of other ways to get fit

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Editor's letter



For lots of people, the idea of getting fit is a pretty scary one. If you lead a sedentary life—and our lean working practices and busy lives mean many of us do—you may be daunted by the thought of enrolling in a gym or running long distances.

Don't despair! The great news is that you don't need to do either of these things to improve your health—and finding fun ways to get fit is what this edition is all about. The key is to get moving, and that doesn't necessarily mean formal workouts. Take our health hero Vernise Aceves (page 8), for example: she discovered a passion for dancing and is enjoying getting into shape with salsa. If dancing might be your thing, check out our article on Disco fever—there's bound to be a dance style to suit you.

Then there's Stephanie Burus (page 2), who keeps it simple with a daily walk. She's not alone: hundreds of you are discovering the pleasure of putting one foot in front of the other, as the feature Walk the walk demonstrates.

Robin Young (page 12) discovered that cycling was not only a fantastic way to get fit—it clears his mind, too. If you're looking for something more combative, read about Rene Vidrio [page 16] who transforms into a pro wrestler by the name of Roadhouse. He's proof positive that getting into shape doesn't need to be dull.

Whatever you decide to try, do let us know about it. We'd love to hear about all the creative ways you're finding to improve your health.

'Til next time,

Patricia

What worked for you?

This is your magazine, so I'd love to hear what you think of it.

- What would you like to read more about?
- How has Vitality made a difference to your life?
- Could you be the next Meggitt Health Hero?

Whatever your feedback, let me know at patriciacarswell@gmail.com

Patricia Carswell, health and fitness journalist



Stephanie Burus

Step by step

Following the birth of her second child, MABS material handler Stephanie Burus found her lifestyle was making it impossible to lose the weight she'd gained. Now she walks up to seven miles a day, has lost 44 lbs, is fitter than ever and looks and feels great. Here's how she did it.

I was eating anything I wanted with no regard to what it was doing to me

Stephanie’s bad habits went back to when her son, now nearly four years old, was born. She gained 80 lbs during the pregnancy and the weight stayed on after he was born.

“I was eating anything I wanted with no regard to what it was doing to me,” she says. “I was eating fast food, lots of processed food, frozen pizzas, potato chips—everything I’m not supposed to eat!”

With two young children at home—she also has a 10-year-old daughter—she didn’t find it easy to make time for exercise and anything vigorous she did, such as mowing the yard, left her exhausted. “We would walk the block and I was tired. I did not have any energy.”

A keen member of Vitality, in April of this year Stephanie entered the Color Bash—a 5K event—pushing her son in the stroller, and came in last place. “It was exhausting for me”, she says.

It was a diagnosis with skin cancer spots that prompted Stephanie to take better care of her health. “I was towards the end of my treatment and decided that I was going to make a lifestyle change,” she says, “so on May 13th I started to exercise and to eat healthy and clean.”

Courageously, Stephanie went cold turkey on fast food. “I completely stopped. No cakes, no cookies, no chips.”

Alongside a healthier diet, Stephanie started to walk regularly. She built up gradually and now walks between four and seven miles every day. When it came to the 5K in August her time was 25 minutes faster than the last one, and she came in third.

Her children are eating more healthily as a result of the changes

She used the app mapmyfitness to log her walks—“It’s very accurate and I get to see progress every day”—and myfitnesspal to monitor her food intake. “I know how many calories I’ve taken in and it has taught me what I need to eat. It’s well worth the time spent.”

Since May Stephanie has lost 44 lbs. She has more to go, but is now making her focus eating healthily and exercising rather than obsessing about numbers. “I feel wonderful,” she says.

What hurts now will be a warm-up soon

The new regimen has been great for family life, too. “Instead of sitting in front of the television we’re going outside and the kids get to see things they’ve never seen in Danville before.”

They make time for their walking by being organized. Straight after they’ve had dinner (which Stephanie now preps in advance on a Sunday), they head out together and walk around Danville. “It’s a priority”, she says.

Her children are eating more healthily as a result of the changes and are, Stephanie says, her greatest motivation. “They are two little cheerleaders”, she says. “I have just started trying to run and yesterday they stood at the top of the hill rooting me on.”

Stephanie has wise advice for anyone daunted by the prospect of starting exercise from scratch. “What hurts now will be a warm-up soon.”



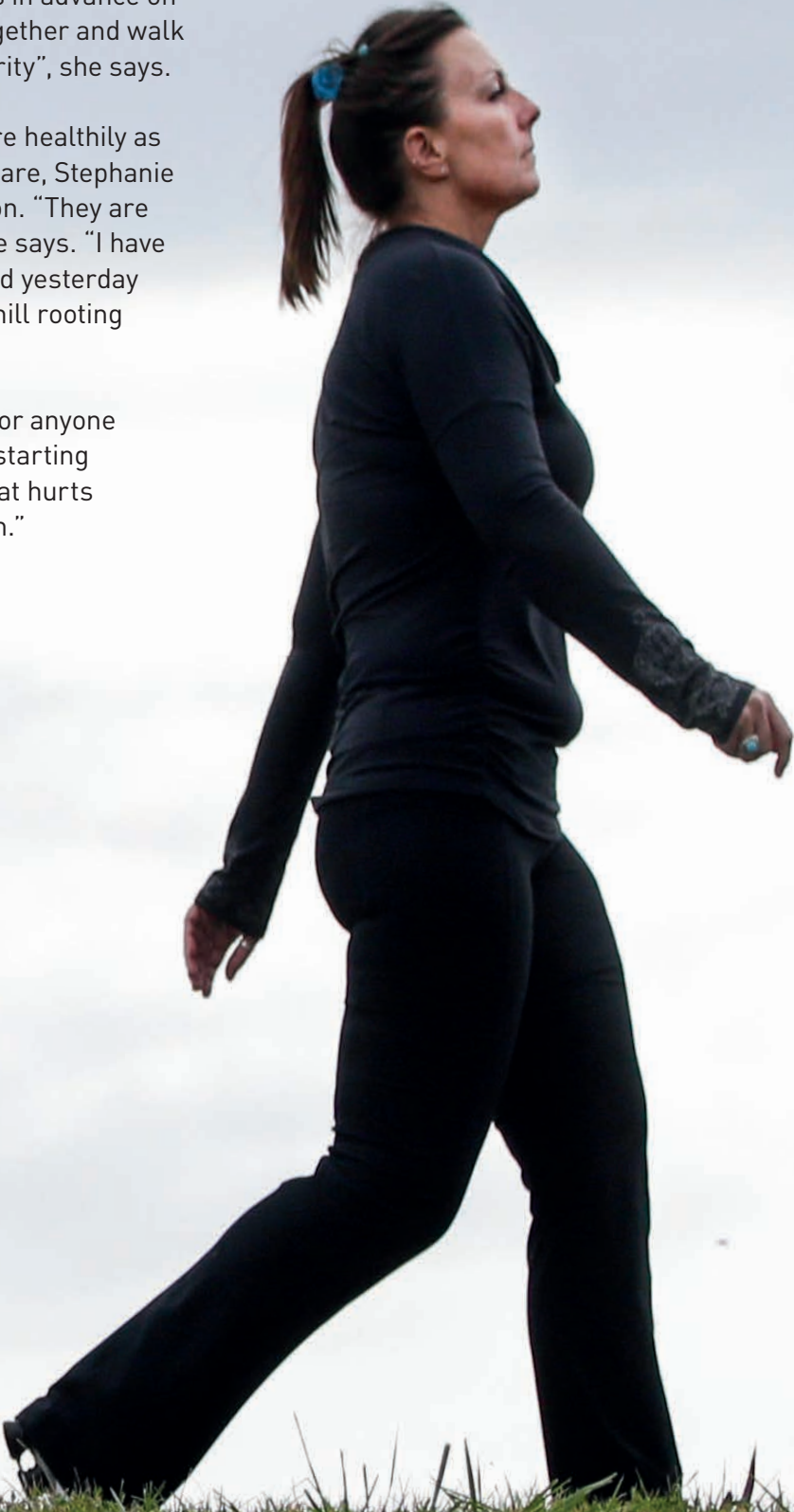
CUT OUT AND KEEP

Stephanie’s top tips

Be patient, but at the same time push yourself.

Remember it takes time to notice the difference—between four and eight weeks.

What hurts now will be a warm-up later.



Walk the walk



In the first edition of Step Up we looked at the health benefits of walking. Since then, many of you have been finding out for yourselves what a fantastic form of exercise it is. You’ve been joining walking groups at work, participating in charity walks and making walking part of your everyday life.

In fact, we’re so keen on walking that we’re coming back to it again. After all, it’s simple, it costs nothing, it’s easy on your joints and you can do it anywhere.

Join the club

Ever wondered what goes on in the walking clubs that are springing up at units around the country? Francesca Sciortino, Customer Account Representative and Wellness Champ at Meggitt Sensing Systems, tells us about the groups in Orange County.



“Meggitt OC has several different walking clubs. The people walk on their breaks, or lunch times, and even on late afternoon breaks. Lots of us take the train to work too and there is a commute walking back and forth from the train station to work. It’s about half a mile each way!

“[Being in a walking group] is wonderful and people are having a blast walking and talking especially to other employees whom they would never have spoken with before. The 9:45 a.m. club meets outside the front lobby doors where we set off for a brisk walk on alternate routes near and around the facility.

“It’s very uplifting and a wonderful way to add a little bit of happiness to our hectic work days, plus it releases endorphins and

makes us, to put it simply, feel GREAT—not to mention the new friendships it is creating. Oh yes, each week the club seems to increase by one or more. So yes, folks are paying it forward and inviting others to join us.

“So come on—walk with us, please!”

It’s very uplifting and a wonderful way to add a little bit of happiness to our hectic work days

The magic pill

To get the benefits of walking, you don’t have to be power walking for hours. According to Dr James Brown from the School of Life and Health Sciences at Aston University in Britain, walking for just half an hour a day is like taking a “magic pill”, helping to prevent obesity and diabetes, lowering the risk of some cancers, relieving depression and anxiety, increasing mobility and dramatically reducing the chance of hip fractures.

A daily walk, according to Brown, is good for the brain, too. It improves your ability to think and reason, slows the progression of Alzheimer’s disease, cuts arthritic pain by half, raises energy levels, reduces fatigue and leads to a 23 per cent lower risk of dying.

“All of these changes are not seen in people who run marathons,” says Brown. “They are not seen in people who lift weights in the gym, or spend four hours running on the treadmill. These are seen in people who walk and who walk for half an hour a day.”

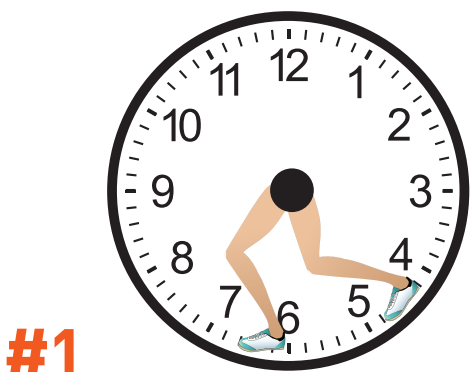
Just moving more—parking a bit further from the facility or the mall, and leaving the car behind if you’re going somewhere close by—can make a significant difference to your health, and it doesn’t take many small changes to add up to the daily 30 minutes that can be so transformative.





Ready for the next step?

So you’ve started walking and now you’re ready to take it to the next level. Some people move on from walking to running, but you can get just as much out of walking without ever breaking into a run. Here are a few ideas for pumping up your walk.



#1

Walk for longer

Gradually increase the length of time you walk each time you go out. If you add just five minutes to your daily walk, within a week you’ll have increased your walking time by half an hour. If you use a pedometer you could increase your walking time by adding more steps to your daily target. One word of advice, though: if you want to avoid blisters and you’re working up to longer distances, make sure you’ve got some sturdy, comfortable footwear.



#2

Hill climbers

Walking uphill burns up more calories and tones your muscles. If you want booty like Beyonce, increase the incline on the treadmill and you’ll soon feel the burn, or if you do your walking in the great outdoors, find a slope and head for the top. If it’s tough at first, keep stopping for rests. And remember to enjoy the view from the top.



#3

Try Nordic walking

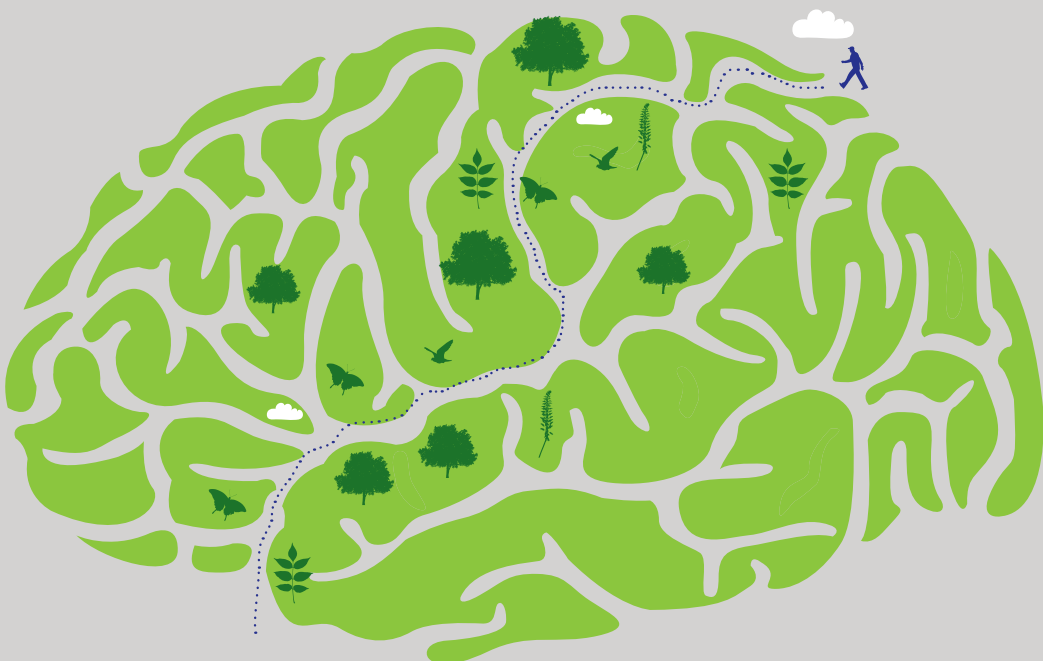
Done properly, walking with poles—better known as Nordic walking or ski walking—exercises more muscles and burns up to 46% more calories than normal walking. While regular walking uses about 70% of your muscles, Nordic walking involves up to 90%. The key is the two poles, which you use like a cross-country skier to work your upper body while you walk.

Many areas have Nordic walking groups where you can learn the correct technique or visit www.nordicwalkingonline.com

Walk to de-stress

Did you know that walking releases endorphins? These are chemicals that relieve pain and stimulate relaxation, and are produced by the body in response to exercise.

All walking is good, but if you want to maximise the relaxing effect of your daily walk, head outdoors rather than walking on a treadmill. Research shows that being in the midst of nature makes you feel more positive.





Get on up!

If noisy gyms and high-school running tracks aren't for you, then why not throw some shapes to get in shape?

Dance is booming in the fitness industry, and there are good reasons why. It's fun, friendly and affordable, and you can burn up calories and tone up your body without even feeling like you're working out.

As humans, we're hard-wired to dance—babies as young as five months old move to music—and recent studies have shown that as well as making us fitter, dancing makes us smarter. Scientists at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in NYC studying senior citizens for more than 20 years found that people who danced regularly were 76% less likely to suffer from Alzheimer's or dementia—far more than any other activity.

It makes us happier, too. Swedish researchers studying over 100 teenage girls found that those who went to dance class had improved mental health and a boost in mood for up to eight months after the classes finished.

Above all, though, it's a powerful calorie-burner. How many depends on your body weight: the heavier you are, the more you burn.

Best of all, you don't need to go to a gym or dance class (although this can be a great way to get motivation from other people and make new friends). There's nothing like a boogie in the kitchen (or bedroom, bathroom, back yard) to make you feel on top of the world.

How many calories will I burn in an hour of ...



Salsa dancing?

The complex footwork of a salsa dance requires a lot of concentration, and time will fly by as you burn 400-500 calories.



Hip hop?

With fewer rules and more chance for freestyle, hip hop can be as relaxed or as intense as you make it, but the variety of movements and muscle groups involved means you can burn anywhere up to 600 calories in 60 minutes.



Zumba?

A dance craze that's designed to get you fit, zumba also caters to a lot of different levels. Some instructors make big claims, but in an hour-long session at full intensity you can expect to burn up to 650 calories, and have a blast while doing so.



Ballroom dancing?

Ballroom covers everything from fast and furious moves like the jive, that can use up more than 300 calories in 60 minutes, to the more sedate dances like the waltz, which still burns a worthwhile 136 calories in an hour.



Our top 10 tracks to get you moving in the kitchen

Shake while you bake

If you want to dance like no-one's watching, try our top 10 kitchen dance tracks and work up an appetite while you're cooking. And hey, if the neighbors see you, just invite them round to join the party.

- 1. You Should Be Dancing (The Bee Gees)**
John Travolta danced non-stop for nine months to prepare for Saturday Night Fever—if you want a svelte physique like Tony, get boogying.
- 2. Billie Jean (Michael Jackson)**
Even if you can't moonwalk like Michael, you won't be able to resist trying—it's a great move for balance and you'll tone up your core in no time.
- 3. I Will Survive (Gloria Gaynor)**
Pick up a makeshift microphone from the kitchen counter and unleash your inner diva. You'll feel so strong, you won't even know when you're tired.
- 4. Twisting the Night Away (Sam Cooke)**
The twist is fun and simple, but did you know it's also fantastic for your thighs? As you shift your weight, you're giving muscles that don't normally get much attention a great workout.
- 5. Macarena (Los Del Rio)**
Once you've mastered the basic movements, change it up and add in your own so you can do the dishes or straighten the house while you dance.

- 6. (I've Had) The Time of My Life (Bill Medley & Jennifer Warnes)**
Try some dirty dancing of your own whether you've got an audience or not. Just grab a partner and get swept off your feet.
- 7. Party Rock Anthem (LMFAO)**
Anyone can shuffle, and no matter what size your kitchen is you can work up a sweat to this song faster than you can say 'LMFAO'.
- 8. Jailhouse Rock (Elvis Presley)**
The kitchen might feel like a jailhouse from time to time, but you'll be having fun in no time with a little help from the King.
- 9. Lambada (Kaoma)**
There's a reason why J-Lo sampled the sultry Lambada on her 2011 number one, On the Floor.
- 10. Single Ladies (Beyonce)**
If you want to look like Beyonce, dancing like her is a good place to start. This fast-paced, hip-swaying dance will get you looking bootylicious in no time.



Fact file: Zumba

What is zumba? Just the biggest dance fitness craze in the world, incorporating styles ranging from salsa to tango to martial arts. The emphasis is on fun and fitness, and a friendly instructor leads you through steps that are easy to learn but which make you work.

Where does it come from? It started out in Colombia in the 90s when aerobics instructor Beto Perez forgot his aerobics music tape for a class he was teaching, and brought along the salsa and merengue

music that he had in his car. The improvised session was such a success that he moved to the USA and began making videos in 2001.

Will I lose pounds or dollars? Definitely pounds! \$5 per class is commonplace, but most gyms do discounts if you sign up for more. Who uses Zumba? Madonna loves it so much that her chain of Hard Candy gyms offer Zumba classes; Shakira used it to keep pregnancy weight under control and J-Lo recommends it as a stress-buster.



Dancing with the stars

Everyone secretly loves the glamor of ballroom dancing, don't they? With dance moves to suit every taste and amazing sequin-covered costumes, it's no wonder that Dancing with the Stars has been such a smash hit.

It's not just celebs who get to take up ballroom dancing. If you fancy having a little sparkle in your life, find out what classes there are in your home town. Whether it's swing in Suwanee or mambo in Miami, there's bound to be a spangle-covered dance to get you fit.

Vernise Aceves

Dancing her way to health

A health crisis for a family member prompted Vernise Aceves to transform her lifestyle. We find out how she has changed her habits and even taken up a new hobby.

What a difference a year can make. Just months ago Vernise Aceves, senior buyer at Meggitt Safety Systems, would have described herself as a pretty sedentary person. “I thought walking from building to building was sufficient!” she says.

It was a family crisis that caused her to rethink her lifestyle. “My mother had double bypass surgery at a very young age,” she says. “She had several heart attacks. It was a real shock. She’s always trying to make me eat healthier and live healthier.”

Prompted by her mother’s experience, Aceves decided that things had to change. She started with her diet. “I used to eat if it was there. I constantly baked for my children and would eat even though I wasn’t hungry. I’d started to put on a little bit of weight.”

Aceves started reading up on nutrition—“I looked on-line, on blogs and started reading books. I’d take little things from everything I read,” she says. “I started eating smaller portions. Instead of three meals, I’d have five tiny ones and I don’t overeat now until I feel like I’m going to explode.”

I don’t want my kids to grow up thinking it’s OK to be unhealthy

Improving the health of her family has been a big motivator for Aceves and she has started serving healthier food at home. “We’ve stopped eating out and have cut fast food down to once every two weeks. I give my children lots of vegetables like asparagus, and plenty of fish. I don’t want them to grow up thinking it’s OK to be unhealthy. I don’t want my kids to be teased growing up, though I don’t want them to be a size zero either.”

Equally important was changing what she drank. “I used to drink at least a six-pack of soda every day. I cut down to once a meal, and now I’ve got to the point where for the last month I’ve not had soda at all—I’ve cut down completely.”



Interestingly for a former soda-addict, she doesn't miss it. "I used to hate water, but now I cannot get enough of it. I don't miss soda at all."

Aceves then turned her attention to exercise. She took up pilates and has begun salsa dancing. "My mother is a great salsa dancer and I have always wanted to learn. I spent last weekend at a salsa festival and I loved it. It's going to be a big thing in my life!"

It's very simple logic. You put less calories in, you lose weight. You put more calories in, you gain

Not only has it been fun to learn the steps —Aceves has discovered the huge health benefits of dancing. "It's a great work-out", she says.

As well as dancing, Aceves started walking and participated in the March of Dimes walk (a walk raising money for a charity to improve the health of mothers and babies).

I'm going to do the Run or Dye walk in a couple of months [a 5k event in which participants get showered in powdered paint]. You wear all white and come out with beautiful colors."

Just a few months down the line, Aceves is already seeing the benefits of her new lifestyle. "I feel healthier," she says. "I don't feel heavy and weighed down and I have much more energy. I've lost weight and I'm gaining muscle. I don't weigh myself all the time, but people have started noticing my waist is getting slimmer and I've lost the chunkiness in my cheeks."

The Vitality program has been a big factor in helping Aceves change her ways. "I'm very involved and have gold status now," she says. "I love to read and learn new things, so I love the website—it's a really good tool. I read all the articles and do things like Vitality Squares, as well as doing the health tests for things like cholesterol."

To anyone wavering about changing their lifestyle, she has a simple message. "Anything's possible. Put your mind to it and you can change. Just do it."



CUT OUT AND KEEP

Vernise's top tips

Find your motivation. Wanting better health for your family is a great source of inspiration.

Ditch the soda. You may be surprised to find you don't miss it.

Find a form of exercise you enjoy. Dance can be fun and a great work-out.

Take a look at the Vitality website—there's loads of great information on there.



FIT OVER

FIFTY

OK, we know you're out there. There are stacks of over-50s in Meggitt who have a pretty sedentary lifestyle, and we're talking to you right now.

But let's be clear about one thing from the start. We're not judging you. After all, lean working practices mean you move around less, and we know how hard it can be to make the time for exercise outside the workplace. At the same time, we want you to consider changing your ways, so please read on.

Why start now?

Whether you were fabulously sporty as a youngster or have never taken to exercise, if you're over 50 and have a sedentary lifestyle you may be wondering why you should even be thinking of starting now. Isn't fitness the preserve of the young and lithe? And really, why make the effort at this stage in your life?

A better question might be, why not? It's never too late to start, and there are lots of manageable, safe and convenient ways to get more active that aren't nearly as scary as you might think.



What's more, there's also never been a better time to start. Thousands of websites and smartphone apps make it easier than ever to get advice about starting exercise in a safe and sustainable way, and to stay in the habit once you've begun.

Small changes, big gains

Getting enough exercise doesn't mean gruelling, Rocky-style workouts—small changes can make a big difference.

One of the best things about starting from scratch is that you'll make fitness gains very quickly: a recent study found that 60-70 year olds increased their aerobic fitness by a massive 30% within six months.

But where do I start?

We get it. The first step is the hardest, and finding the time to exercise is even more of a challenge when you have work and family life to consider.

Don't despair. You don't have to join a gym, buy any fancy sportswear or commit to anything major to get yourself started. Start by being conscious of moving around more. A pedometer is a really easy way to become aware of how many steps you take each day—read our article on fitness gadgets to get some ideas of what's out there.

Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- **Make your partner happy** by offering to do the housework. You can burn up loads of calories whilst getting the house gleaming.
- **Shake while you bake:** read our article on dancing in the kitchen to inspire you to work up a sweat while you're doing the cooking.
- **Move around at work:** instead of emailing a co-worker, why not take the chance to get out of your chair and go and speak with them in person? And if you offer to make the coffees, you'll get some extra steps in as well as making yourself popular.
- **Find out if there's a walking group** at your facility—lunchtime walks are an easy way to fit in some exercise, and you don't need to be super-fit to join in.
- **Do you have a backyard that needs some attention?** Gardening is great exercise and gets you out in the open (though the ride-on mower doesn't count!) Start with something gentle like weeding and work your way up to digging and shoveling.
- **Leave the car at home.** If you've a short journey to make, to the shops, to church, to pick up the kids, walk it instead.
- **If you're planning some exercise time** schedule in a short, manageable amount of time at first—just ten minutes is a good base to work from.
- **Think about what you enjoyed doing** when you were younger. Could you take up an old hobby that would be so much fun you'd hardly notice you were exercising?
- **If you can afford it, consider hiring a personal trainer** just to get you off the ground and make sure you do it safely. Once you have a few sessions under your belt, you can go it alone.



Go hard or go home?

This is where your age might make a difference. Whereas the young can launch themselves into intense exercise without too many ill effects, as you get older your body becomes more prone to injury, especially knee and hip joints. High-impact exercise like running and weightlifting, which are great for younger people, can increase the risk of injury. It's also important to watch the intensity of your workouts, especially if you have high blood pressure or have a history of heart disease in your family.

That still leaves huge scope for all sorts of exercise to suit all levels. Low-impact exercise classes like yoga and Pilates aren't just great exercise—they've been proved to reduce stress and are a great way to meet new people in a calm and friendly environment. Yoga keeps you flexible, reducing your risk of muscle strain, while Pilates strengthens your core and helps with back pain and posture. If you're looking to build upper body strength, head to the pool. Swimming won't do any harm to your joints and has been shown in a 2009 study to be better for longevity than walking or running. The important thing is to build up slowly and to find exercise that you enjoy and will keep coming back to. Working out with a friend or partner will make it more fun and keep you motivated.

How vigorous is 'vigorous'?

Not as hard as you might think. The Harvard School of Public Health gives jogging at 6 mph, cycling at 15 mph and shoveling as examples of vigorous exercise. Moderate exercise includes walking at 4 mph and mowing the lawn.

Doctor's orders

While doctors are recommending exercise as medicine more and more, it's important to consult with a medical professional before making any major change to your lifestyle. They'll be able to advise you on how to start safely, and help you work around any illnesses or injuries that you might be suffering from.

Why it matters

Moving around more will make a massive difference to your health and to your sense of wellbeing. Far from tiring you out, it'll make you feel healthier and more alert.

But don't just take our word for it. According to a 2011 study, people taking 15 minutes of daily activity like brisk walking added three years to their life expectancy.

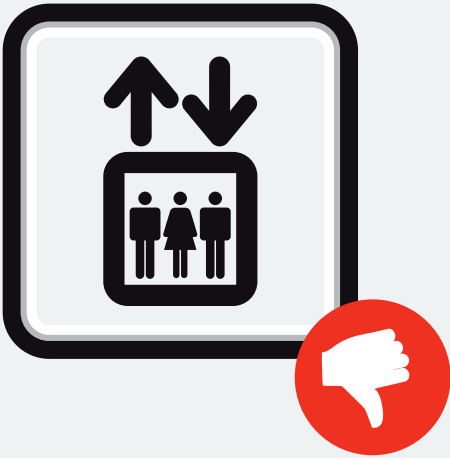
Even taking the stairs can be a lifesaver: a recent Harvard Alumni Health Study found that people who climbed 35 or more flights of stairs a week had a much higher life expectancy than those who climbed fewer than 10.



=

+3 years
to life
expectancy

daily activity



Robin Young

Staying yung

Once an athlete, always an athlete. Or so, at least, Robin Young used to feel when he considered his own health. He'd been an active sportsman as a child and young man, playing rugby and cricket and later tennis, squash and golf.



Once he reached his 30s, though, work began to interfere with his exercise regimen.

"I was traveling too much for team sports. I stopped doing the aerobic stuff when I was about 30. I still played golf, which we all know isn't the most aerobic activity, but other than that I did almost nothing after the age of 30."

Although he was putting on weight, Young wasn't concerned.

"I didn't think about it," he says. "I was fit because I always had been—or at least that was what I told myself. I was healthy because I was an athlete."

It was a new relationship (with Jane, now his wife) that forced Young to reconsider his health, specifically his smoking habit.

"I'd been a smoker for a long time, even when I was playing racket sports. In my late 30s—later in life than I imagined—I settled down with Jane. I thought, 'I've got

to cram a lot of experiences into quite a small amount of time, so I'm going to need all the energy I can get. If I need energy, I can't afford to carry carbon monoxide around in my bloodstream, so I have to kick smoking."

"What had stopped me giving up was believing that I won't get cancer—that I'll be lucky. There was no motivation to quit! However, when I realised that smoking was sapping my energy every day, and that I didn't want that, giving up became an easy thing to do."

Young says he needs three things to change a habit. First, he needs a strong, personal reason to change his ways—and the new relationship and need for energy gave him that.

Secondly he needs "an easy outlet—a way to do things differently that was simple to access", with clear rules to live by. "All I had to do was not light a cigarette. Since I already did this 99.9% of the day, making it 100% of the day was simple."

The third thing he needs is rapid feedback, and he got this from Jane. "Jane said she liked it that I didn't smoke anymore because I didn't stink!"

With smoking out of the way, though, Young carried on with his sedentary life, comfortable in the belief that he was athletic enough not to need to change his ways. Then in his forties, two things changed his mind.

On holiday in Barbados he was photographed in the pool with his daughter, Evie. "I looked like a whale," he says.

By itself, this photographic evidence was not enough to trigger a change. But then at a medical examination he realised he

I discovered endorphins are actually real and far more enjoyable as an addiction than nicotine is

I was terrified that if I rode a bike even a mile, I would only prove that I'd let myself go too far and that there was no way back. What I actually found was that getting started was a profound relief

wasn't quite the athlete any more. With an ECG hooked up, he had to jog on a treadmill until his heart showed signs of stress.

To his horror, the test revealed that his heart rate and blood pressure were under stress when he got only 40% through the levels. "The young physio who conducted the test gave me a look that said 'maybe-not-the-worst-I've-seen-this-week'; and I felt absolutely pathetic," he says.

Vanity (the photo), shame (the look) and shock (being able to complete only 40% of the test) gave him the reasons to listen to



the physiotherapist when she explained that if he wanted different results, he would have to start exercising and controlling how much he ate. "Crucially, she said that the amount of exercise that would make a difference wasn't big."

Now that Young had his important, personal reasons to start changing his ways ("if I'm honest, vanity and shame are the strongest!"), he needed his outlet—something to make it easy. A nudge from friends helped him hit on cycling and he started with a gentle bike ride with his family. Having survived that, he began cycling to work occasionally, nine miles each way.

"It was easy because we've got a shower at work", he says. "It wasn't strenuous because I went at a pace I could manage. It's amazingly easy to cycle slowly! It's also easy to eat as much as you need, instead of as much as you can."

Then he needed feedback that what he was doing was making a difference. He measured his weight dropping off. Within

three months he had lost 20lbs reasonably effortlessly. After six months, his resting heart rate was 25% lower. At the same time he realised he was even enjoying the physical effort of cycling. "I started feeling twitchy if I wasn't doing it. I discovered endorphins are actually real and far more enjoyable as an addiction than nicotine is."

Two years later, Young met up with an old school friend, a doctor working with elite athletes, who suggested he try training to participate in endurance events. By now well and truly bitten by the cycling bug, Young decided to enter the Etape du Tour—a mountain stage of the Tour de France for amateur riders. He started training harder and completed the ride successfully, finishing on the famous climb to Alpe d'Huez. "I was pretty emotional at the finish. Three years earlier, I'd been nervous about riding five miles with my family, and here I was at the top of a mountain with a finisher's medal."

Now, six years on, the weight is still off and he continues to cycle regularly. His new goal is to maintain enough base fitness to complete endurance events without training obsessively.

The benefits of his new, active lifestyle go beyond simply his improved physique. "The key thing is I feel I have more choices," he says. "I can play swing ball in the garden with my daughter Evie without getting tired, or I can sit on the couch and enjoy watching TV with a beer and a snack, but without guilt, because I know I'm fit, and I'm a decent weight."

Exercise also relaxes him. "When I'm cycling I let my mind go into different places. I get into a hypnotic state where my mind wanders off and solves problems. I've also discovered beautiful new places and new routes around where I live [in the New Forest in England]."

Experiencing the benefits of adopting a healthier lifestyle has made Young an advocate for others to do so too, and he sponsors the Vitality program at Meggitt. He becomes particularly impassioned when he talks about the health of Meggitt as a whole.

"Our people need health care they can depend on. We have data that shows we are not a healthy group, on average, and this costs us all a lot of money.

"Obviously, as a corporation, we provide Vitality as a tool for people to learn more about their health, reward them

CUT OUT AND KEEP

Robin's top tips

Find a reason to change your ways: it will be much easier to motivate yourself

Start small: it only takes a small change to make a big difference

Sign up to Vitality! It makes sense both financially and physically.

for improving their wellbeing, feel good about Meggitt as an employer, and bring healthcare bills down for everybody. "

Having made such big changes in his own health, he understands the challenges for others in embarking on a fitness program.

"I understand that some people find the thought of making the changes to get healthy scary. Personally, I was terrified that if I rode a bike even a mile, I would only prove that I'd let myself go too far and that there was no way back. What I actually found was that getting started was a profound relief."

Young is keen for people to understand that just a small difference in their actions can make a really big difference to their wellbeing. "My steepest improvement came when I was cycling gently to work once or twice a week and eating a bit less. If you want to go crazy and do endurance events, you can, but you don't need to. So, if cycling up mountains seemed crazy to me six years ago, what seems crazy to me now—when I first think about it—is that people who have the opportunity to sign up to Vitality and pick up \$900 would choose not to.

"But when I reflect more patiently, I think I understand it a little better. My own model of personal change says I need a strong, personal reason, an easy outlet and feedback. Vitality helps people with the outlet and the feedback. And \$900 and some Vitality bucks are a reason, but they're not a strong, personal reason and I know it wouldn't have got me signed up on its own—I'm far too cynical. People need their own reasons and they need to find them for themselves. And they find them when they're ready."

How to eat well at ... Taco Bell

Taco Bell may not be the classiest joint in town, but it does have a knack for creating juicily delicious combinations of meat and cheese. Unfortunately the moreish taste comes at a cost: unless you're smart, most items on the menu won't do your waistline any favors.

The chain has seriously gone to town on explaining the nutritional content and options on its website, but really, who goes on-line before hitting a fast food restaurant? Luckily you have us to help you out, with our guide to healthy choices next time you feel like some budget burritos.

Burritos to beware of

It probably won't astonish you to learn that the biggest weight gain culprit on the menu is the XXL Grilled Stuff Burrito—after all, the clue's in the name. This giant burrito, filled with three cheeses, rice, beans, sour cream, guacamole, avocado ranch dressing and fiesta salsa, comes in at a whopping **880 calories**, with a hefty 37g of fat. Honestly, don't go there unless you've just run a marathon.

This doesn't mean you can't enjoy a burrito. The regular bean burrito is a modest 370 calories with just 11g of fat, or, if you can't do without your fix of beef, the Fresco Burrito Supreme with steak is just 350 calories and contains 9g of fat.

Talking of Fresco, it's worth knowing that most items on the menu can be ordered as a lower-fat alternative—you need to ask for it to be prepared "Fresco Style". This means that mayo-based sauces, guacamole, reduced-fat sour cream and cheese are replaced by pico de gallo, tomatoes, diced onions and cilantro. Plenty of flavor but without the huge fat content.

Sinful salads

If you're fondly imagining that a salad is a healthier option, beware! **The Fiesta Taco Salad with steak or beef packs in a waist-expanding 780 calories and—wait for it—42g of fat—more even than the XXL burrito.** A marginally better salad option is the Express Taco salad with chips, though even that gives you 580 calories and 29g of fat. Consider this an object lesson in why salads aren't always the best choice on any menu.

Sideshow blob

No Mexican food is complete without the sides. Guacamole, chips, cheese, sour cream—mmmm, what's not to love? But here's the thing. These fat-laden sides can double your consumption without even touching the sides. Approach with caution. Either skip the dip altogether, or put a small portion on your plate at the start and send the rest back.

Shrink your drink

You don't need us to tell you that soda is loaded with nutrient-free sugar and empty calories, but we'll say it anyway. Taco Bell's signature soda, the Mountain Dew Baja Blast may be a classic, but a 40 oz serving will deliver a sugar-filled 550 calories (and now it's available in stores, you might want to bear that in mind when you're thinking of adding it to your cart).

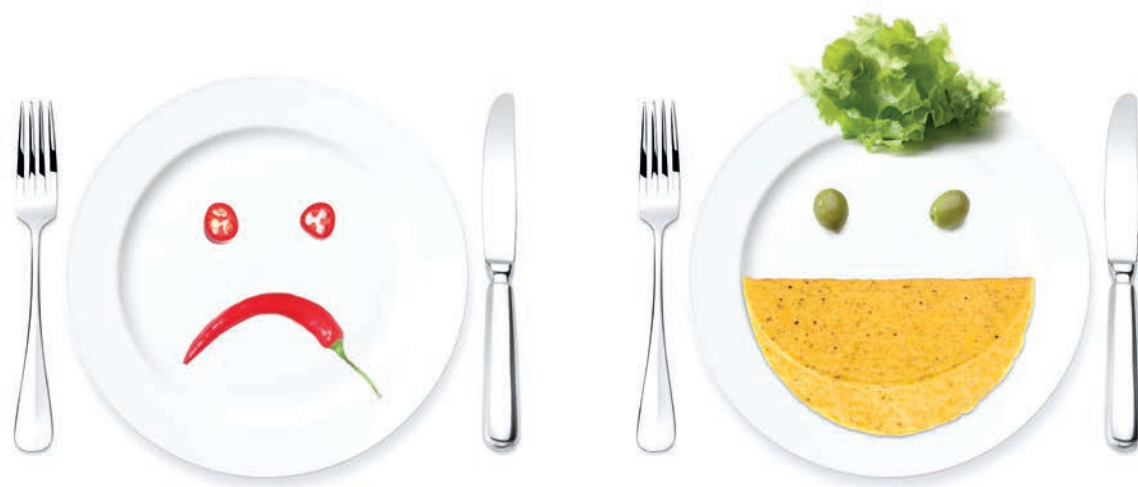
If a trip to the Bell isn't complete without a soda, order the smallest one you can (though you might not find one below 16 oz). A diet soda will be calorie-free but with a list of ingredients as long as your arm so consider good old-fashioned water or even a coffee (hold the whip).

Calories in context

What does 880 calories even mean? And how much fat is too much?

The American Heart Association recommends that the average sedentary adult female consumes 2,000 calories a day (2,500 for a guy) with a total of 56-77g of total fat each day.

Let us know what chain you'd like us to cover next. McDonalds? Texas Roadhouse? Chuck E. Cheese's? We'd love to help.



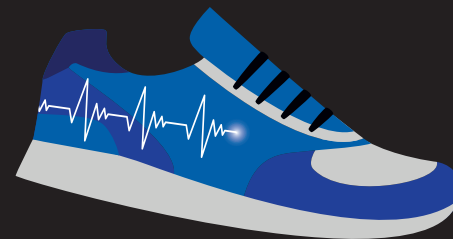


Did you know?

Vital facts |
Breakthroughs |
Health news |

Baby steps to stay healthy

You might be put off running by the thought of spending hours pounding the pavements. Now there's good news for anyone short of time. Research published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology shows that you don't need to commit hours on end, or be a fast runner, to get the benefits. Running for only a few minutes a day, or at slow speeds, may still significantly reduce the risk of death from cardiovascular disease. The main thing is to keep at it and not to give up after the first week!



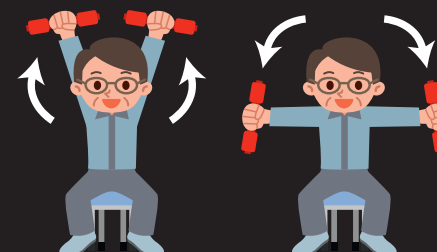
Rise and shine

Here's something to get you out of bed. A startling study from Northwestern University found that people who got most of their exposure to bright light in the morning had a significantly lower BMI than those who had most of their light exposure later in the day. The earlier the light exposure occurred, the lower the BMI, independent of physical activity, caloric intake, sleep timing, age or season. What better reason do you need for an early morning walk?



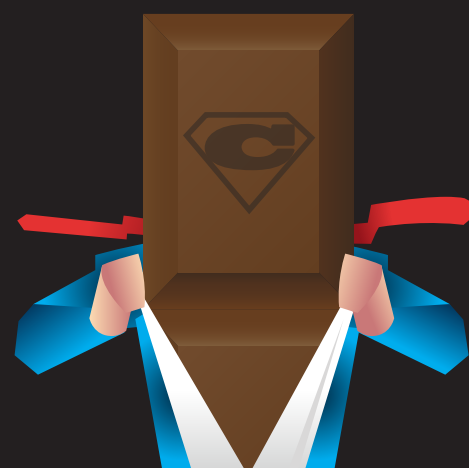
If you sit, get fit

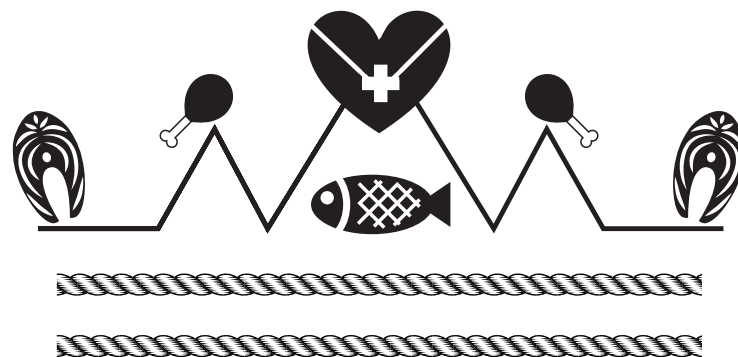
We all know the health effects of sitting down for long periods. Prolonged sedentary time is linked to obesity, metabolic syndrome, type 2 diabetes and many other health problems. Now a new study by researchers from the American Cancer Society, the Cooper Institute and the University of Texas has found that the effects of being sedentary are reduced by being physically fit. So if your work keeps you in a chair, make sure you keep fit in your down time.



Chocolate, the superfood

It's not just sweet, delicious and tempting. Now it seems that dark chocolate could help to prevent obesity and type 2 diabetes. A report in the Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry found that one particular type of antioxidant in cocoa prevented laboratory mice from gaining excess weight and lowered their blood sugar levels. Before you go crazy for the Hersheys, though, remember that the health benefits are only associated with dark chocolate, and that it's still pretty high in fats and sugars. If you choose on with a minimum of 70% cocoa solids and eat it in moderation, you can't go far wrong.





Rene Vidrio

King of the Ring

Pro wrestling, with its high drama and cheering crowds, sounds like a lot of fun and showmanship but, as Rene Vidrio tell us, it requires discipline, a healthy lifestyle and a huge commitment to fitness.

Most of us look for a leisure pursuit that gives us a bit of respite from the cut and thrust of our day-to-day lives. Rene Vidrio is not most people. When he is not working in the shipping and receiving department of MDSI Orange County, he transforms into Roadhouse, a successful pro wrestler who thinks nothing of taking on opponents 20 years his junior.

I'm a showman. I know how to work the crowd

"As a child I was mesmerized by larger than life characters," he says. Vidrio is certainly one of those. Having been a night club bouncer when he was younger, his show name, "Roadhouse", comes from the movie Roadhouse in which Patrick Swayze plays a bouncer. "I'm a showman," he acknowledges. "I know how to work the crowd."

As any aficionado of wrestling will tell you, though, there's a lot more to the sport

than posturing and performing. With its hard knocks, dangerous falls and violent encounters, it requires serious fitness and a high pain threshold.

Luckily for Vidrio, he has always been sporty, having played football in high school and college. This prepared him well for the rigorous two-year training program with MMA champion, John De La O, that he had to undertake before taking to the ring for his first match.

The training consisted of three-hour training sessions, three times a week, but Vidrio felt privileged to be in De La O's "dojo" (training school). "John was not just my trainer but one of my mentors. He is inspirational to me."

Vidrio acknowledges that the regimen was demanding. "The training is vigorous," he says. "Only the toughest can make it through. I sacrificed, spent lots of money and time and worked hard. The training involves a lot of drills and cardio and it plenty of mental and physical toughness.

You have to be tough enough—there's a lot of bumps and bruises. You learn as you go along how to protect yourself, and in time your body adjusts, but you have to have a high tolerance for pain."

When he had completed his gruelling training, Vidrio embarked on the pro wrestling circuit and for four years traveled up and down California, showcasing his talent at various venues. "Earning the respect of the fans is foremost and very gratifying," he says, and he enjoyed being recognized and being asked for autographs.

After four years, the physical knocks were taking their toll and Vidrio retired from the sport for a few years, wanting to spend more time with his daughter. He missed the thrill of the ring, though, so when earlier this year his former trainer approached him and asked him to form a new pro wrestling team in Orange County, he jumped at the chance. "I was honored," he says. "I had missed the wrestling. It was part of my life."

Only the toughest can make it through. You learn as you go along how to protect yourself, and in time your body adjusts, but you have to have a high tolerance for pain

Orange County Championship Wrestling has been a success, with events selling out. “It’s doing really well,” says Vidrio. “We are fortunate to have a stable of the finest wrestlers in the world, and the list just seems to be getting bigger.”

Vidrio’s co-workers are intrigued by his unusual pastime. “Everyone asks about it,” he says. Some of them come along to watch his fights and were there to see him crowned OCCW Heavyweight Champion this year against wrestling legend King Fabiano, on a card featuring seven wrestling matches in a packed-out arena.

At 41, fighting guys of 23 and 25 is a challenge and Vidrio has to work hard to stay healthy. “I have to look after myself more than when I was younger,” he says. His training involves a lot of cardio and he takes care of his diet. “I eat a lot of chicken and tuna,” he says, “and I stay away from fatty foods. I weigh 294 lbs so I’m a well-proportioned big guy—I’m not skinny.”

For all the hard work, though, he dismisses the idea that others shouldn’t aspire to a similarly testing lifestyle.

“If I can do it, anyone can.”

I have to look after myself more than when I was younger. I eat a lot of chicken and tuna and I stay away from fatty foods



CUT OUT AND KEEP

Roadhouse recommends – Vidrio’s top tips

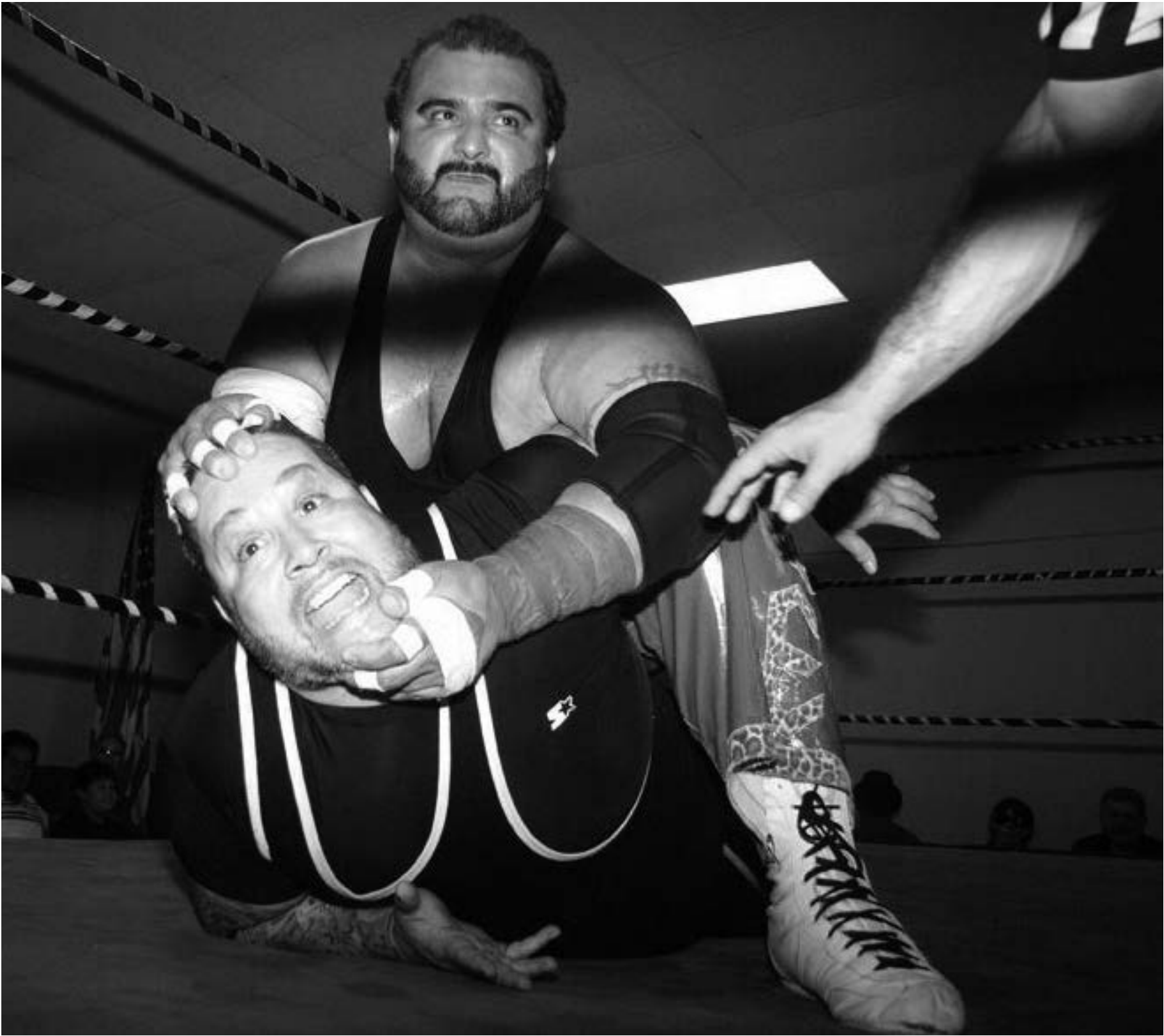
Do an activity that you enjoy– if it’s fun you’ll stick with it.

If you’re returning to sport when you’re older, take extra care of your body.

You don’t need to be skinny to be fit and healthy.

Cardio is great for keeping your weight in check.

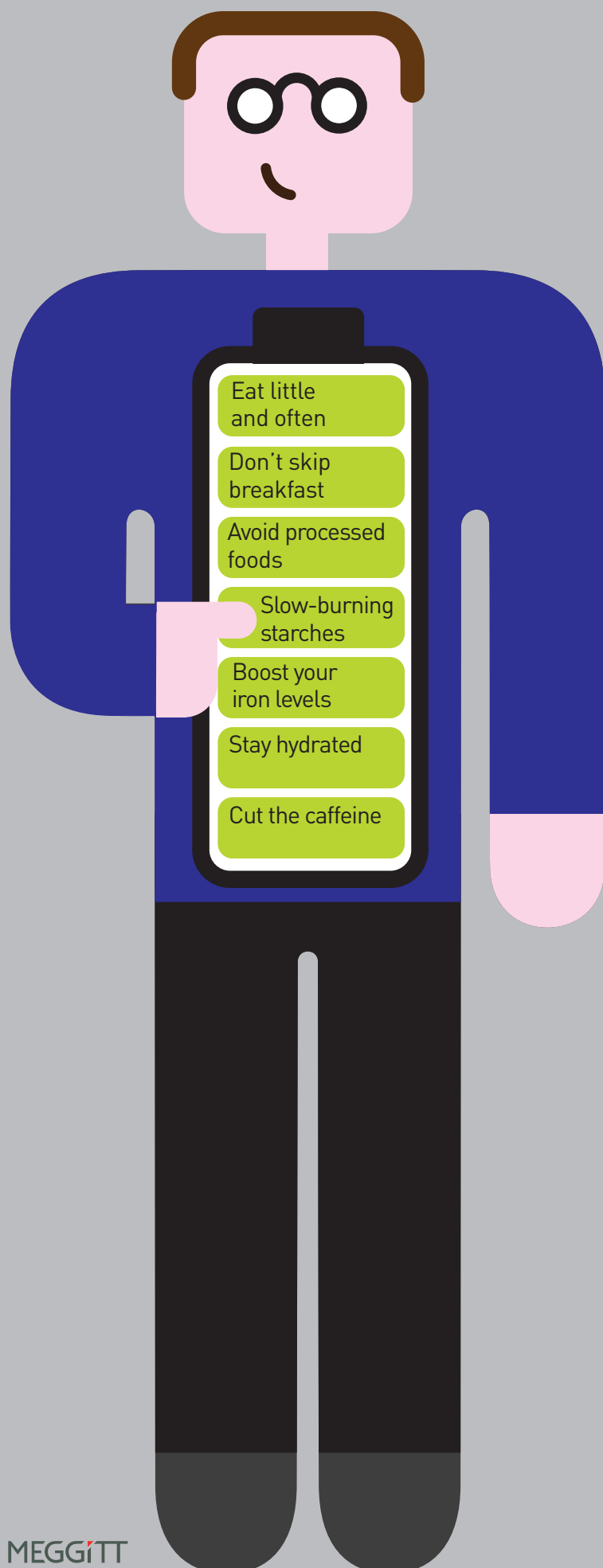
Eat plenty of lean protein like chicken and tuna and stay away from the fatty foods.



The energy diet

Who wouldn't love to have a bit more energy, to leap out of bed feeling perky, maintain your verve all day and avoid the traditional energy slumps?

Most of us take flagging energy levels for granted—an inevitability that comes with age and responsibility—but the fact is that with the right diet you can make a huge difference to how you feel. With the energy diet, we can't promise you'll start bouncing around like a newborn lamb, but it should give you a consistent boost that will keep you powering through the day without flagging.



The energy rules

There's nothing fancy or new-fangled about the Energy Diet—it's just good, old-fashioned, solid nutrition. Follow these rules and you'll soon have a spring in your step.

1. Eat little and often.

Your blood sugar levels will remain steady and you'll be less tempted to reach for unhealthy treats. Have regular, healthy snacks and don't let yourself go hungry.

2. Don't skip breakfast.

It's basic advice, but so many people ignore it. Skipping the most important meal of the day sets you up for a day of unhealthy habits and see-sawing energy levels.

3. Avoid processed foods.

Foods that are high in fats and sugars will have an adverse effect on how you feel, and refined carbohydrates and sugars mess with your blood sugar levels and put a strain on your body.

4. Choose slow-burning starches.

Whole grain bread and pasta and brown rice should be the order of the day. Cook potatoes with their jacket on and consider sweet potato as an alternative—despite the name it has a less dramatic effect on blood sugar levels than regular potatoes.

5. Boost your iron levels.

Insufficient iron in your diet can make you feel tired and faint. You'll find it in red meat, poultry (especially the darker cuts), green vegetables, apricots, raisins and unsalted nuts.

6. Stay hydrated.

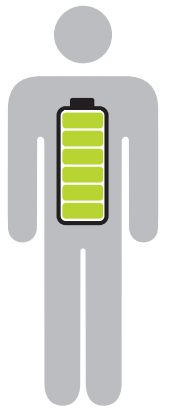
Even mild dehydration affects your mood, energy levels and ability to think clearly. So make sure you're getting plenty of fluids. Choose plain water over soda and juice, and go easy on the alcohol.

7. Cut the caffeine.

Far from helping your energy levels, caffeine can end up making you feel more tired. Although you'll get an initial buzz, it's invariably followed by a slump. Experiment with herbal teas or decaffeinated drinks, or drink water instead.

The energy diet top ten

Include these ten superfoods in your diet and you'll soon notice the difference. Just don't blame us if your co-workers complain that you're annoyingly cheery.



1. Brown rice: rich in manganese, which helps to produce energy from protein and carbohydrates, brown rice will release energy slowly to maintain your energy levels for longer. Try it with a veggie stir-fry and lean protein.



2. Eggs: full of B vitamins to convert food into energy, plus vitamin D for strong bones, and packed full of protein, eggs are back in favor among health experts. For a lean, energy-filled breakfast, cook up one whole egg with two or three egg whites.



3. Beans: containing both protein and complex carbohydrates, beans are especially useful for vegetarians—our health hero. Go for bean burritos instead of beef ones, and put them in salads and stews.



4. Pumpkin seeds: a good source of protein, healthy fats and fiber, plus manganese, magnesium, phosphorus and zinc, these will support your energy levels. Toast them and sprinkle on salads or munch on them with dried fruit.



5. Apples: an apple a day really does help keep the doctor away. They are high in fiber so take longer to digest than many other fruits. Pair with low fat cheese for a healthy pick-me-up.



6. Spinach: full of iron to help the body convert your food to energy, they also contain plenty of vitamins and minerals. Try them raw in salad for a super-nutritious lunch.



7. Almonds: loaded with protein, manganese, copper, riboflavin and calcium, they not only play a role in keeping energy flowing through the body by neutralizing the toxins in your cells—they're also a handy snack to keep hunger pangs at bay.



8. Salmon: this delicious fish contains high levels of omega-3 fatty acids which lower cholesterol and reduce your risk of heart disease, plus plenty of protein. Team it with spinach and brown rice for a power dinner.



9. Yogurt: so long as you avoid the high-sugar varieties, this is a great snack as it's high in calcium and magnesium and is available with varying fat contents. Add fruit for a superfood breakfast.



10. Oats: high in calcium, potassium, magnesium, vitamin E and B vitamins, oats help to improve your skin and are thought to have stress-busting properties. Oatmeal is a great choice for breakfast, but avoid granola, which is usually very sugary.

The platinum club

As the platinum club grows in numbers, we meet two health heroes and regular guys from MABS who want everyone to know that if they can do it, anybody can.

More and more people are achieving platinum status—the highest status that it’s possible to earn in the Vitality program, achieved by earning 10,000 Vitality points. There are now 340 members of the platinum club, made up of 208 employees and 122 spouses.

When you picture the typical platinum club member, you may be imagining a super-lithe cross between Madonna and Serena Williams, but the truth is that plenty of ordinary folks are joining the platinum club. We chatted to two platinum members, both from the MABS Danville distribution center. Chad Whitis works in the wheel assembly area and Jon Glasscock in the brake assembly area.

Chad and Jon are great examples of how you don’t need to spend your life in the gym to be fit and active. Chad plays softball in a league, playing three nights a week and on weekends and traveling all over the country. “There’s a lot of things you can do exercise-wise”, says Chad.

Jon is keen on walking and makes sure that he takes the 10,000 daily steps that earn him 10 points every day. He earns further points through the Vitality website, entering quizzes and setting on-line goals for his fitness.

Jon has become so enthusiastic about the healthy living message that he wants everyone else to know about it. “I tell everybody in my family about the difference between 5,000 steps a day and 10,000. I’m out here preaching to everybody I work with!”

As for the rewards, Chad has used his points to buy Amazon gift cards. “I do a lot of deer hunting,” he says, explaining that he has bought equipment such as deer cameras and meat grinders. “Instead of spending \$200 of my personal money to buy a deer camera I can use the points.”

The truth is that plenty of ordinary folks are joining the platinum club

They are both proud to have achieved platinum status but are keen to acknowledge the role that Wellness Champ, Connie Brewer, has played in keeping them motivated.

“We’re really active here”, says Jon. “Connie pushes us to do all the different walks. Some of us do it in the morning before work, some at lunch—you see people walking all the time. She also gets us to do the things on the computer. There’s all kinds of different ways to earn points. Connie pushes us hard!”

“It’s like a small family within a family,” adds Chad.

Connie’s aim was to get at least 10 people at the distribution center (where there are 50 employees) to platinum status and she has now achieved this.

“I try to tailor the things we do towards them,” she says. “I try to find things that they’ll do, so I’ve had them pulling weeds around the smoking area, which is an exercise activity. We’re always figuring ways of trying to engage in activities so they will count towards Vitality. With MapMyFitness [see the article on fitness devices], it’s just a way of thinking, ‘I’m going to mow the yard. I’m going to turn my fitness device on so that I’ll get points for it.’ Or ‘I haven’t hit my 10,000 steps today. Maybe if I go for a walk this afternoon I’ll hit those 10,000 steps.’”

Both Jon and Chad hope that their platinum status might motivate others to become more active. As Chad says, “It makes them think, ‘If he can get platinum, we can get platinum.’”



Points to get you to platinum

You can earn points by all sorts of means, from completing on-line courses on the Vitality website to wearing a pedometer and logging your daily steps. Here are a few ideas:

Completing your Vitality Health Review This is a straightforward on-line questionnaire and wins you a healthy 500 points with a further bonus of 250 points if you complete it within the first 90 days of your Vitality program year.

750

New members If you're brand new to Vitality, you can earn an additional 500 points for getting engaged with Vitality for the first time.

500

Completing your Vitality Check You earn 125 points for each part of the check, so if you have the entire screening you earn 500 points.

500

Completing your Vitality Check If your Body Mass Index results are within (>18.5, <25) range, you earn 1000 points.

1000

Completing your Vitality Check If your blood glucose results are within (<100mg/dL) range, you earn 600 points.

600

Completing your Vitality Check If your blood pressure results are within (diastolic <80mmHg, systolic < 120 mmHg) range, you earn 600 points.

600

Nutrition courses Complete an on-line course and you'll learn all about healthy eating as well as earning yourself 300 points per course.

300

Flu shot Make sure you stay clear of bugs this winter and earn yourself a cool 200 points.

200

There are lots of other fun ways to earn points—take a look at the Vitality website to find out what's on offer. And don't forget to spend those bucks once you've earned them!

Why bother with platinum status?

Platinum status is more than just a title—it brings real rewards. With platinum status you get:



A bigger discount in the Vitality Mall



Bigger gym subsidies for eligible gyms



Bigger vouchers for Hyatt hotels



More chances to play Vitality Squares

Oh, and don't forget the fun hat and certificate that every platinum member receives!

And the winner is ...

With such an active membership, you probably won't be surprised to learn that MABS Kentucky has been declared the clear winner of the 2014 Meggitt Group Points Challenge, with an impressive average of 638 points per person. What an achievement! In second place is MSS Orange County with 254 average points per person, closely followed by Meggitt Defense with an average of 216 points per person.

Better still, you earned over 800,000 points as a company during the challenge this year—almost twice the number of points earned during last year's challenge. Congratulations to everyone who participated, and especially to the Wellness Champs who have done such a great job at motivating and inspiring everyone to earn points.





High-tech fitness

Fitness devices are not just for geeks and elite athletes. Even if you're just starting to get fit or are the kind of person who needs to call on a teenager to record your favorite TV show, you can probably find a device or an app to suit you. Used well, devices and apps can track your fitness, motivate you and save time in gaining Vitality points.



A lot of fitness devices are Vitality-approved and allow you to log your workouts or activity with very little effort. Approved devices include Fitbug and Fitbit pedometers, Garmin running watches and Polar heart rate monitors (all available in the Vitality Mall—you can buy them either with your own money or with Vitality bucks). Popular apps include the Vitality-linked MapMyFitness's mobile App.

The Fitbug

The Fitbug, which you can find in the Vitality Mall, is an accurate interactive pedometer that records your daily aerobic activity, sets you targets and even offers you nutritional advice. It comes with a USB connector so you can upload your workout information to the Fitbug website and link it to your Vitality account.

- It tracks activity in the form of "steps".
- You wear it wherever you go—it tracks walking, running, cycling, elliptical machine and more.

The Fitbit Activity Tracker

This clever device doesn't just look cool—it does all sorts of clever things to help you keep tabs on your lifestyle. You can get four versions of it in the Vitality Mall—the Zip, the One, the Flex, and the Charge. All versions track steps and distance and the One, Flex, and Charge even track the time and quality of your sleep. This activity tracker automatically syncs your data so you don't need to log your workouts. You can also log everything you eat and drink and it'll tell you the calorie content.

What smart phones are compatible with MMF?



Still confused?

To learn more about each fitness device and how to set up and/or sync your device for points, head to the Vitality website and navigate to Get Health > Fitness & Exercise > Fitness devices.



The Polar heart rate monitor

- The Polar heart rate monitor is a wrist watch which works with a transmitter that you wear around your chest. The transmitter picks up the signals from your heart and sends it to your watch. It's available in the Vitality Mall.
- The Polar heart rate monitor keeps track of your heart rate to show how hard you are working. By keeping track of your heart rate you can make sure that you are in the correct zone to burn the maximum number of calories.
- You can sync your heart rate monitor to Vitality and upload your workouts from your watch to the computer.
- When you exercise, your heart rate will need to be at 60% or greater of your maximum for a minimum of 30 minutes in a single training session to earn ten verified workout points
- You can also earn five verified physical activity points for at least ten minutes at 60% or greater of your maximum for a minimum of ten minutes.

Garmin Forerunner

The Garmin Forerunner—a GPS running watch—is much loved in the running world and at most race events you'll see competitors checking it at the start and finish. It is synced to Garmin Connect, an on-line tool to store, analyze and (if you want) share your activity.

MapMyFitness

MapMyFitness is a free smartphone app that uses GPS to record and chart your daily fitness activities and routes. If, for example, you go for a walk or a bike ride, it will record where you have been, how far you have gone and figure out how many calories you have burned. It can be synced with Vitality to show you've worked out. MapMyFitness has other useful functions, such as information about the nutrition values of favorite foods and connecting you with other MMF users.

Stay cool – keeping the information in perspective



While it's useful to log your information and keep track of your nutrition and activity levels, be sure you don't let it take over your life. It's all too easy to start obsessing over the numbers - this will curb your enjoyment and can lead to unhealthy habits.

If you feel you're getting too hung up on your device, take a break from it for a few weeks and get back to basics. You can still work out and eat healthily without having to consult a screen. If you still want to log your workouts, you can do it the old-fashioned way.

Events

Once again we’ve been marveling at the energy and enthusiasm of the Wellness Champs who have been organizing Vitality events, helping you to earn points, have fun and get healthy. Here are just a few of the activities that have been going on.



Seeing double

Never ones to do anything by halves, MABS in Kentucky organized not one but two 5K events, called “Run for Fun”, the first in July and the second in August (so that people working on both shifts could have a chance to participate). Both events took place on a Saturday morning.

Participation levels were high, with about 35 attending the first and 20 doing the second and plenty of kids involved. Children taking part received a gift bag.

Wellness Champ Connie Brewer says, “This was our first time holding 5Ks and we had a great time, even with the rain and heat. Some of our employees had completed 5Ks previously, but quite a few had never walked or run in a 5K. It was low pressure and everyone was cheering each other on. So it turned out to be a wonderful family atmosphere. I am sure there will be more 5Ks in our future.”



Up the creek

Following the hugely successful March for Babies last year, the MUSA Champs decided to repeat the challenge. This time they settled on the Arroyo Creek event, which offered a 5K, 10K and half marathon, for both runners and walkers.

One of the main attractions was the location. As Wellness Champ, Griselda Esquivel, told us, “It’s a nice area near homes and parks where you can see beautiful cranes, birds and ducks in the water ponds.”

Those doing the 5K earned 250 Vitality points, the 10K participants earned 350, and the one person who completed the half marathon won a handy 500 points.



Their loss is their gain

Thirty-three people have enrolled in the Biggest Loser Challenge at Meggitt Orange County, running between August and October, and when we went to press they had lost a hefty 175.7 lbs.

“It’s very exciting to see everyone in it slimming down!” says Wellness Champ Francesca Sciortino. “The results are shown weekly and only the percentage of body fat lost is shown. No weight of anyone is published anywhere. This way everyone has a chance to win regardless of the amount of weight they need to lose. Whether one has 4 lbs or 40 lbs to lose, they are in the right place with this challenge.”

To encourage the competitors, they have organized a three-mile power walk on the San Clemente beach trail that will earn participants 350 points each.

Your champions

If you have any questions about Vitality and how you can reap the rewards of healthy living, talk to your Wellness Champ. Here’s who they are:

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