



Keeping your health and well-being in the know

# MyHealthTALK

September 2010

## Family Health & Fitness Day is September 25th!

Family Health & Fitness Day is a national health and fitness event for families always held the last Saturday in September. The event's purpose is to promote family involvement in physical activity. Local organizations throughout the country will host family-related health and fitness events at health clubs, schools, parks, hospitals, YMCAs/YWCAs, malls and other community locations.

Here are some creative ways to sneak in more physical activity as a family:

- Start the day with a few yoga poses together as a family.
- Take a walk around the block as a family after dinner and make it a daily habit.
- Walk to the store instead of taking the car.
- Add simple activities like jump rope or ball toss to your daily routine.
- Always keep simple toys such as balls and rope handy for a spare moment. Kids can always be occupied with a foam ball toss while standing in line as an example.

For more information, visit [www.fitnessday.com/family](http://www.fitnessday.com/family) or call Health Information Resource Center, 1-800-828-8225.

## why with FRUIT AND VEGGIES more matters

We all know that eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables is good for you. Most are lower in calories and higher in fiber than other foods. Eating more fruits and veggies instead of high-fat foods may make it easier to control your weight. People that eat more generous amounts of fruits and veggies compared to those who do not are more likely to have a reduced risk of chronic diseases, including stroke, type 2 diabetes and some types of cancer.

To get a healthy variety, think color. Eating fruits and vegetables in different colors gives your body a wide range of nutrients, like fiber, folate, potassium and vitamins A and C. Some examples include green spinach, orange sweet potatoes, black beans, yellow corn, purple plums, red watermelon, and white onions. Eating a large variety of fruits and veggies will help you to feel healthy and energized. Don't be afraid to try new varieties regularly.

For more information and recommended amounts see The Fruits & Veggies More Matters website at: [www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org)

Here are some suggestions to save time and money and add more fruits and veggies to your diet:

- Pick fruits or veggies that require little peeling or chopping such as baby carrots, cherry tomatoes or grapes.
- Prepare extra vegetables and freeze leftovers for quick sides. Simply heat to 165 degrees and serve.
- Shop local farmers markets or visit nearby farms and pick your own fresh produce while in season.
- Make vegetable-based one pot meals using beans or soy instead of higher cost protein sources, such as meat, fish or poultry. One pot meals also reduce the number of pans & utensils used so less time is spent washing dishes, saving you time.
- Buy in bulk. Freeze excess or purchase frozen, canned, or dried varieties that keep longer.





# Health Benefits of Yoga

## Do it anytime, anywhere

Yoga has both preventive and therapeutic benefits. It has been shown to offer both physical and mental benefits to the body and the mind.

The many physical benefits of yoga are:

- improved flexibility and muscle joint mobility;
- strengthens, tones, and builds muscles;
- corrects posture;
- strengthens the spine;
- eases back pain;
- improves muscular-skeletal conditions such as bad knees, tight shoulders and neck, swayback and scoliosis;
- increases stamina;
- creates balance and grace;
- stimulates the glands of the endocrine system;
- improves digestion and elimination;
- increases circulation;
- improves heart conditions;
- improves breathing disorders;
- boosts immune response;
- decreases cholesterol and blood sugar levels; and
- encourages weight loss.

The mental benefits include:

- increased body awareness;
- relief of chronic stress patterns in the body;
- relaxation of mind and body;
- centers attention; and
- sharpens concentration.

Western doctors and scientists are discovering additional health benefits of yoga. Studies have shown that it can relieve the symptoms of several common and potentially life-threatening illnesses; such as arthritis, arteriosclerosis, chronic fatigue, diabetes, asthma and obesity. Many believe it even fends off the ravages of old age.

### Yoga Benefits All Ages\*

Whatever your age, yoga can enhance your lifestyle...

\*Consult your physician prior to beginning an exercise program.

As well as being fun for children, learning yoga develops self-discipline and can enhance their physical and mental health. Yoga is good for developing coordination and help to improve concentration and memory. Regular practice can enable young people to keep their natural flexibility for many years.

It can help teenagers to keep their youthful flexibility and give them the inner strength to say no to negative influences.

Older people often find that gentle yoga exercises allow them to retain mobility and may relieve problems such as arthritis and poor circulation.

Yoga is for everyone, including “seniors or those with medical problems,” reports the Cleveland Clinic.

During pregnancy, yoga promotes good health in both mother and unborn child. Yoga lessens the effects of such problems as backache and depression. Most women who practice yoga find that it can make labor easier and shorter.

Yoga is for everyone, including “seniors or those with medical problems,” reports the Cleveland Clinic. Everyone can benefit from following a regular yoga routine, as it counteracts many of the problems suffered in modern life. Yoga releases the physical tensions caused by hours of sitting, deep breathing gives vitality by increasing the supply of oxygen to the brain and meditation enhances the powers of concentration. Yoga improves strength and flexibility in the mind as well as the body, and aids relaxation. Yoga can enable one to relax fully, and promotes sound sleep; it also improves digestion and stimulates circulation. It frees the practitioner both physically and mentally, often heightening intuition and creativity.

## Yoga@Work

Try these exercises at work to help keep you alert during the workday, and release stress before you go home.

### Arm Stretch 1

1. Bring your arms behind your back, clasping your hands. Or, hold a tie, sweater, or scarf (or something) between your hands.
2. Lift your arms as high as you can. Lift your sternum.
3. Hold for 30 to 45 seconds, relax for a moment, then repeat.

### Arm Stretch 2

1. Interlock your fingers and extend your arms outward, straight in front of your shoulders. Your palms should be facing outward.
2. Slowly raise your hands overhead, stretching all the way from the waist. Work on straightening your elbows. Hold for 30 to 45 seconds, relax, and try again.

### Chair Twist 1

1. Sit on the edge of your chair, sideways with your left side facing the chair back.
2. Throughout the pose, keep your feet and knees together and even.
3. Place your hands on the each arm of your chair.
4. Inhale while straightening your spine. As you exhale, twist toward the back of the chair, twisting from the very bottom of your spine -- pushing with your left hand and pulling with your right hand.
5. Repeat the inhalation/straighten, exhalation/twist series several times.
6. Release and switch sides.

For more information on yoga at work:  
[www.mydailyyoga.com/yogaindex.html](http://www.mydailyyoga.com/yogaindex.html)