

Health

FITNESS • MEDICINE



GETTING BACK ON TRACK

It's a new year, let's all resolve to get fit forever!

Rx briefs

Hospice volunteers

Arbor Hospice & Home Care in Ann Arbor needs volunteers in the following areas:

- Clerical assistance during office hours at The Arbor Hospice Residence, Ann Arbor
- Feeding (indoor) birds at The Arbor Hospice Residence, Ann Arbor, 7:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. Tuesdays
- Flower arrangements noon to 2 p.m. Mondays and 8:30-10:30 a.m. Fridays

We are always in need of volunteers who are willing to visit with patients in private homes, assisted living facilities and nursing homes in more remote areas of Arbor Hospice's seven county service area throughout Southeastern Michigan.

Believe it or not, spring is around the corner and we will need many devoted gardeners to help with clean up, planting and weeding on the expansive grounds of The Arbor Hospice Residence, Ann Arbor. Individuals are encouraged to recruit a group of his/her fellow gardeners and "adopt" a garden at the Residence. The following new volunteer orientation dates are available:

■ 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 18

■ 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 12 and Feb. 19 (you must attend both sessions). To register or for more information, call the Arbor Hospice & Home Care Volunteer Services Department at (734) 662-9999 ext. 413.

Getting your Zzzz's

An estimated 57 million people in the United States have trouble falling asleep at night or suffer from some type of sleep disorder. If you believe you're one of them, St. Mary Mercy Hospital's Sleep Disorders Unit can help you find the cure.

Patients usually spend the night in the hospital's sleep lab, where experienced technologists monitor and record brain waves, respiration, leg movement, heart rhythms and oxygen levels.

Some of the most common sleep disorders are insomnia, narcolepsy, sleep apnea and restless legs syndrome. These disorders may cause loss of memory, depression and anxiety, disorientation, mood changes, morning headaches, excessive daytime sleepiness, irritability and inability to concentrate on tasks.

Most disorders can be treated with continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP), a mask that covers the nose and forces air to open airways. Other treatments include weight loss, medication, surgery and behavioral therapy. For more information on St. Mary Mercy Hospital's Sleep Disorders Unit, call (734) 655-3992.

Incontinence

Doctors at Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak are recruiting women to test an experimental oral medication to determine its effectiveness in reducing the number of stress incontinence episodes. The investigational drug is being tested in women with SUI, or stress urinary incontinence, and MUI, or mixed urinary incontinence. (SUI is the involuntary loss of urine that occurs if the muscles that support the bladder are weakened.)

MUI is the involuntary loss of urine as well as a strong urge to urinate.)

Participants will be compensated for their participation. Call (248) 551-1355.

Sandra Dalka-Przybyl, a Beverly Hills based freelance writer, has set out to lose weight again. She's determined that nothing will sidetrack her in 2003 in achieving her weight-loss and fitness goals.

BY SANDRA DALKA-PRZYBYL
CORRESPONDENT

OK, it's 2003, and the majority of Americans who dared to make New Year's resolutions have vowed that this year they will lose weight and get fit. But, of course, we didn't need to make this resolution at 12:01 a.m. Jan. 1. A group of us - myself, especially - resolved to begin our "Fitness Forever" challenge months ago. We're already on the way to a healthier 2003. Right?

Well, readers, I did lose weight in the last months of 2002. To be honest, however, I gained it back - and, sadly, a few more pounds - in the last days of the year. My reason for this is somewhat justified. But, if the truth be told, I could have done better.

In December, I spent more than a week with a dear friend saying goodbye to her 41-year-old brother, a wonderful young man, the father of five, died from an unknown illness that first manifested itself three years ago. He died on Dec. 16.

During that final week of his life and the days after, friends and neighbors brought the family an abundant amount of food, primarily deli trays, pasta dishes and desserts, lots and lots of desserts.

In our sorrow, my friend and I downed these food gifts as fast as they were delivered. This was meant to help with the grief. It didn't.

My friend, like me, overate when stressed. She, like me, gained weight. She, like me, didn't care.

But now, she, like me, is disgusted with herself. (I met this friend six years

ago when we were asked to do an infomercial with Richard Simmons, the nation's diet guru. She had lost 153 pounds; I, 170 pounds.) And she, like me, has resolved to take the extra pounds off in 2003.

So, you see, I did have a good excuse. What I also have is the same extra pounds, and a few more, that I had when my "Fitness Forever" challenge began in 2002. And, maybe like me, you, too, have those same extra pounds.

FRESH START

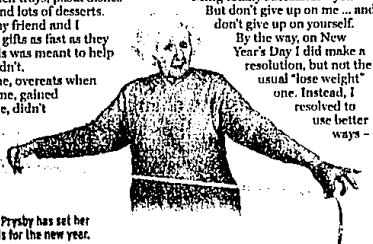
Don't fret. We can't do anything about yesterday. That has come and gone, just like 2002. Also, feeling guilty and disgusted with ourselves won't get us to our goal.

In fact, being negative is the worse place to be if we hope to accomplish a positive action. It's now 2003 and we're blessed with 12 months of time to accomplish something good in our life.

We can be successful in our weight-loss and get-fit challenge if we go one step at a time, one meal at a time, one day at a time and consistently do what we have to do to reach our goal.

I originally planned this "Fitness Forever" challenge for myself and to inspire and help you with your success. I apologize for going off the track and not being totally successful - yet.

But don't give up on me...and don't give up on yourself. By the way, on New Year's Day I did make a resolution, but not the usual "lose weight" one. Instead, I resolved to use better ways -



Sandra Dalka-Przybyl has set her fitness goals for the new year.

and not overeat - to handle stress. This will cut down on the excuses, no matter what comes my way.

Now, to get us started again - and to help those of you who have stayed on track in your "Fitness Forever" challenge - I'm offering my "Alphabet for Success." Remember: we want to be the BEST WE CAN BE IN 2003!

ALPHABET FOR SUCCESS

A - Avoid negative thoughts and add positive, optimistic people to your life.

B - Believe in yourself. Know that you are capable of achieving your goals.

C - Control your desire to go too fast and concentrate on a slow but sure approach.

D - Design a balanced food plan filled with lots of fruits and vegetables.

E - Exercise regularly. It's the only way to achieve physical fitness.

F - Focus on your successes, no matter how small; not on your mistakes.

G - Give yourself permission to be human. Be kind to yourself when you have difficulty on your journey.

H - Help yourself succeed by taking the time to plan and prepare good food and to exercise.

I - Invest in a food scale and use it daily to keep portion sizes in check, and a scale (use sparingly) to check on your weight and your progress.

J - Join up with others involved in this same challenge for support.

K - Keep a food diary. Experts say this is one of the best ways to lose weight successfully.

L - Lift your spirit and renew your determination with a few minutes of quiet reflection each day.

M - Make each day count. Each morning vow to do well and work toward this mini-goal.

N - Nurture yourself with treats such as a bubble bath, a favorite song, a good book.

O - Obtain the support of family and friends. This can make all the difference.

P - Plan...plan...plan. It is only through

Join the 2003 Fitness Forever Club

We want you to join us in reaching your own success in getting healthy and fit. Let us know how you are doing or, if you need help, e-mail Sandra Dalka-Przybyl, an American Council on Exercise-certified Lifestyle and Weight Management Consultant, with your questions and concerns at sdprzbyl@aol.com.

Also, we want to report on your weight-loss and exercise success. Send your story and picture to Renee Skoglund, Health and Fitness, The Observer & Eccentric, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150. Contact her at (734) 953-2128; fax (734) 591-7279; e-mail rskoglund2@oe.homecomm.net.

planning (food and exercise) that you can succeed.

Q - Quell temptations by keeping healthy foods on hand.

R - Rely on your inner strength and God. You've got what it takes and God will help you.

S - Savor your success, no matter how small.

T - Take charge. Don't let anyone or anything keep you from your goal.

U - Understand that you're not perfect. Know this and you'll do perfectly fine.

V - Vary your exercise. Doing the same thing every day is good, but mixing it up is better.

W - Water yourself! H₂O and lots of it works...on your body, your skin, your weight loss.

X - X out bad feelings about yourself and bad foods for your body.

Y - Yearn for success. A passionate zeal for a healthier life can move you to action.

Z - Zip your lips when faced with unhealthy food choices and you'll rap the craving in 20 minutes or less.

This alphabet is from *Slow But Sure* (Signet, 2001) by Sandra Dalka-Przybyl and is used with permission.

Oakwood warns: Use caution when shoveling the snow

Old man winter rang in the New Year covering many areas with snow, ice and chilling temperatures.

Many people were forced to dig out their shovels to clear driveways and sidewalks. However, before heading outside to shovel snow, it is very important to keep in mind the dangers associated with this activity. Dr. George Nahhas, an Oakwood Healthcare System cardiologist, warns that heart attacks are more common during the winter because cold temperatures can cause a person's heart rate to increase.

"Shoveling snow is an extremely demanding activity, which can cause the heart rate and blood pressure to go up sud-

denly. If there is blockage inside an artery, a heart attack can occur," he said.

Nahhas says people who smoke, have diabetes, high cholesterol, or high blood pressure are at an increased risk of suffering a heart attack, especially while shoveling snow.

He warns that age is the biggest risk factor that could trigger a heart attack while shoveling snow. He advises that women 55 and older and men 45 and older avoid shoveling snow, until they are seen by a doctor or a stress test is performed. According to Nahhas, more often than not, a person may not actually suffer a heart attack until minutes or hours after shoveling snow.

'Shoveling snow is an extremely demanding activity, which can cause the heart rate and blood pressure to go up suddenly.'

Dr. George Nahhas
cardiologist

"If there is blockage due to plaque formation in the heart, stress caused by snow shoveling can cause that plaque to rupture. It can take from several minutes to hours before an artery closes, which triggers a heart attack."

The risk of having a heart

attack is not the only danger associated with shoveling snow. Spine and back injuries are also common in people who are not physically active.

Jody Tomasic, director of Ambulatory Rehabilitation for Oakwood Healthcare System, says the spine is subject to a significant amount of stress with snow shoveling.

"If you bend forward and lift a shovel full of snow, especially heavy, wet snow, you exert great force on the discs - soft gel-like material located between the vertebrae - which are the bones in your back. This could potentially injure a disc, causing it to protrude into or through the ligaments, which help to hold the disc in place and provide stability to the spine," said Tomasic.

She recommends:

- Bend your knees.
- Spread your hands, so the hand closest to the shovel blade is fairly low.

This raises the lift and ensures that the snow load is as close to your body as possible.

- Sweep a manageable amount of snow into the shovel.
- Straighten your knees to stand.

"To drop the snow from the shovel, turn with your feet and legs; do not twist your trunk and torso. If you have pre-existing back problems, you shouldn't be lifting snow," said Tomasic. "Before beginning any activity, always check with your doctor first."