

TO YOUR HEALTH



DR. KEITH LEVICK

Weekend jaunt proves uplifting and insightful

It was time to get away for a weekend. I was tired, stressed out and needed a change of scenery, so my wife and I decided on a trip to Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

A week before we left, a good friend informed me he was going to Toronto that same weekend. Subsequently, reservations were made, tickets to a play were purchased, and the four of us were off.

My friend, whom I'll refer to as "Ken," was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS) 15 years ago. Multiple sclerosis is a neurological disease that affects the central nervous system and can be characterized by recurrent symptoms of unsteady gait, shaky limb movements, rapid involuntary eye movements and speech defects. People with this disease may lose coordination and experience difficulty with muscle control. MS can also impair vision and cause weakness of the limbs, stiffness of the muscles, problems with the bladder, depression and memory loss.

These symptoms and the ensuing effects vary, as does the intensity level, and in some cases the disease results in severe disability. Unfortunately for Ken, his MS has severely affected his legs and he needs the use of a cane and an electric scooter. But the subject of today's column is not MS itself, rather it's to share the everyday struggles of the "physically challenged." This is an interesting term that, frankly, I was unaware of because like many people, I use the word handicapped. Ken sure set straight on the appropriate term. After a weekend with Ken and his wife, I became aware of numerous issues that never occurred to me.

We often talk about our fast-paced world, rushing from one place to another. Time moves slowly for people whose legs have been affected by MS. From getting in and out of a car to walking into a restaurant, minutes move slowly for the physically challenged. I caught myself losing patience and wanting to scream, "Will you hurry up!"

When walking to our seats at the theater, Ken began to tumble. A sloping aisle can be very dangerous, but this is not something most of us ever consider. To a boy fraught with MS, however, it is like negotiating the ski slopes of Nagano, Japan.

I found myself becoming angry at the establishments that were not easily accessible to the physically challenged. Waiting in line to use an extremely narrow lavatory irritated me; there was no way Ken could maneuver himself in such tight quarters. Furthermore, the long stairway we needed to climb in order to reach our seats in a five-star restaurant was similarly difficult.

Inaccessibility is something I still can't fathom. Ken became fatigued at the shopping mall. He went as far as he could with his cane, but his weakened muscles began to quiver. We made it to the information center where wheelchairs were available, but I became incensed at the woman behind the counter as she explained the importance of completing paperwork before Ken could use the chair. Finally, I walked around the counter and took the wheelchair so Ken could sit down. I still believe he doesn't understand my assertive behavior.

As Ken strained to get himself in the pool to exercise, the realization of how unwary I am of the everyday struggles of the physically challenged crystallized. Our society often takes for granted the simple things in life—whether it be time, curbs, stairs or attitudes. We become upset over traffic jams, broken down automobiles or any other hassle that slows us down. For the physically challenged life is not only slower but full of obstacles I'm only beginning to understand.

My weekend in Toronto was fun and uplifting. I learned a great deal about society's limitations and those of my own. How strength and determination are a state of mind and not measured by the size of biceps or how quickly we go nowhere fast.

There was a moment of irony as we went to the Hockey Hall of Fame. Ken turned up the power on his electric scooter in order to make a traffic light and as he did, he glanced back at us and exclaimed, "Will you guys hurry up!"

(Dr. Keith Levick is a health psychologist and the director of The Center for Childhood Weight Management in Farmington Hills. You can reach him at 482-681-9825 or send him an e-mail at kleick@aol.com.)

No motivation? Exercise at home

When it's cold and gray outside and you just can't get motivated to leave the house, that's no reason not to exercise. In fact, you may never need to go to the gym to work out because just about everything you need is probably already in your own home.

Exercising at home is easy and convenient for those who have young children and can't (or don't want to) go to a health club to get a great workout. Plus, it's basically free.

One of the best reasons to exercise at home is because you can work out whenever and however long you want. So there are no more excuses about being able to find the time to exercise. You can do it in the comfort and privacy of your own home while meeting your body's strength-training and aerobic needs.

Aerobic Exercises At Home

By building out your flat buttocks, you will be adding muscle. The only way to add muscle to an area is via the "overloading theory." Whether you choose to overload a muscle with a weight-bearing machine or free weights in conjunction with a calisthenics method is strictly a personal decision. However, both methods will generate positive benefits in muscle increase.

The theory of overloading a muscle specifies that the body, or particular areas of the body, when regularly stimulated by increased exercise intensity and duration will respond with an increased capacity to perform physical work.

The body is being trained to adapt to increasing physical demands. Therefore, the muscle overworked will increase in size. This does not mean you "go for the burn."

A safe training effect will occur when a muscle is worked just a little beyond its fatigue point. This exercise must be on a regular basis with a gradual increase in intensity and duration.

Before buying an expensive machine—especially if it is just your buttocks that needs work—I would first try calisthenics exercise.

Purchase two- and three-pound weights. Any large sporting goods or gym equipment store will have them. You will be using your own body weight in some positions and ankle weights in others.

Here is the first position and the best way to start your exercise sequence:

■ **Pelvic tilts**—Lie on your back with knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Your back should not arch up; it should be rounded

and out to the side for an overall strengthening of your upper arms.

■ **Work out on the stairs.** Stairs are excellent because you get incredible strength training without the weights. For a calf workout, stand on the edge of a step with the balls of the feet letting your heels drop down. Push up on the balls on the feet, hold a few seconds and then lower. Repeat. This one is great for strengthening the calves.

■ **Use heavy furniture to assist in your upper body strength training.** You can do standing push ups by leaning your arms against a countertop and pushing away repeatedly.

■ **If these ideas seem too complicated, there are always the standard sit-ups and pushups.** They may not be the newest craze but they certainly do work!

■ **Ideally, exercise sessions should last from 20-60 minutes in order to be most beneficial to the heart and lungs.** But if your time is limited, exercise in 10-minute increments three to six times throughout the day.

In order to be successful and stick with it, you should set up specific times to exercise at home. If it is scheduled

into your day, you are more likely to be diligent about your workout.

Also, be sure to warm up your muscles thoroughly before you work out and stretch for a few minutes after you exercise. If you haven't been exercising regularly before this point, start out gradually to avoid soreness or injury.

Throughout the workout, drink water to keep your body hydrated and working efficiently. If you don't want to work out alone, enlist your spouse or invite a friend to come over to share in the workout. Turn on some music and enjoy! Exercise can break up the daily monotony and invigorate you for the rest of the day.

I read every one of your letters and I love your comments! Please keep writing me with any questions, inspirational stories or suggestions for upcoming articles to: "Talk to the Mirror," Weight Watchers Corporate Communications, P.O. Box 9072, Farmington Hills, Mich. 48333-9072. For more information on Weight Watchers, call 1-888-3-FLOWINE.

(Florine Mark is an appointee to the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and the Michigan Fitness Foundation.)

TALK TO THE MIRROR



FLORINE MARK

Basic calisthenics can help with problem area

Question: I am writing for your advice regarding an area I need help with. I would like to know what exercise or what exercise machine I can use or buy to help build a flat "back end." Your response would be very helpful.

Answer: Altering your body's natural shape will take perseverance and a lot of patience.

By building out your flat buttocks, you will be adding muscle. The only way to add muscle to an area is via the "overloading theory." Whether you choose to overload a muscle with a weight-bearing machine or free weights in conjunction with a calisthenics method is strictly a personal decision. However, both methods will generate positive benefits in muscle increase.

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Before buying an expensive machine—especially if it is just your buttocks that needs work—I would first try calisthenics exercise.

Purchase two- and three-pound weights. Any large sporting goods or gym equipment store will have them. You will be using your own body weight in some positions and ankle weights in others.

Here is the first position and the best way to start your exercise sequence:

■ **Pelvic tilts**—Lie on your back with knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Your back should not arch up; it should be rounded

ed in toward the floor. Your pelvis should be tilted toward the ceiling and your abdominal should be tight. Your buttock muscle (gluteus maximus) should be contracted and released rhythmically up and down. Your butt only comes up an inch and your gluteus maximus muscle is in an isolated position. About 100 lifts will do, counting a fairly fast rhythm.

■ **Back leg lifts** (using ankle weights)—In this second position, place yourself on elbows and knees with your back rounded like a mean cat. Extend one leg back with ankle weight, preferably two pounds at first and gradually moving up. When working one leg to the back, your hips should be square to the floor.

Your back is rounded up a little with the abdominals pulled in tight. Your leg lifts should be small and resistive. Avoid a jerking action because this can injure the lower back. This whole movement does not exceed six inches.

■ **A standing pike**—In this third position, you will work your butt and thighs. Stand in a pike position—knees bent over your heels, feet in line with your knees, and toes probably turned out slightly at a 45-degree angle.

Body tall—squeeze butt/stomach tight. Action—centrally located bodyweight, press down around to six to eight inches (down and up) to five sets of 10. Hold just count down and pelvic tilt forward squeezing the butt to two sets of 10. Gradually increase this.

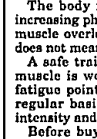
These calisthenics exercises I have given you are basic and safe. Try them and see how you feel. At first you will be sore, but I promise you it will be a good, healthy soreness. And drink lots of water, six glasses a day.

Start doing these exercises three times a week, gradually increasing them to every other day. The procedure should only take 20 minutes at most each time.

Let me know your results!

(Myrna Partrich is co-owner of The Workout Co. in Bloomfield Hills. She is an appointee to the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and the Michigan Fitness Foundation. Send questions or comments for Myrna to: Myrna Partrich, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham MI 48009.)

EXERCISING OPTIONS



MYRNA PARTRICH

Healthy Living spotlights Oakland County-related health and medical news and information. To submit information, write: Healthy Living, Observer & Eccentric News, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham MI, 48009. Or fax: (248) 644-1314.

NUTRITION HEALTH FAIR

The first step toward leading a healthier lifestyle is to begin with a healthy diet. Crittenton Hospital's Food and Nutrition Services Department wants to help that process by inviting you to attend the 10th annual Nutrition Health Fair from 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Thursday, March 26 at Crittenton Hospital in Rochester (1101 W. University Drive). This free event is offered in conjunction with National Nutrition Month. This year's theme is "Make Nutrition Come Alive—It's All About You."

"This slogan reinforces the importance of nutrition as a key component to a healthy lifestyle," said Betty K. Smith, a registered dietitian at Crittenton Hospital. "It is designed to communicate the flexibility of nutrition recommendations, dietary guidelines, and the food guide pyramid as the basis for daily food choices, which can be personalized to each individual's food preferences, nutritional needs, health status and



HEALTHY LIVING

lifestyle."

The Nutrition Health Fair will feature free food samples, nutrition displays, games, contests, raffles, free waist-to-hip ratio measurements, prizes, cooking demonstrations, and finger stick testing for cholesterol and HDL. Registration is not necessary. For additional information, call Crittenton's Food and Nutrition Services Department at (248) 652-5630, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

MIOSHA DISCUSSION

Crittenton Hospital's Business Relations Committee will host a free Breakfast Club program, entitled "When MIOSHA Visits," on Friday, March 6. Richard Zdob, an official from the Department of Labor/OSHA, will lecture during the informational presentation, which is set to run from 7:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. at Crittenton (1101 W. University Drive) in Rochester. A light breakfast will also be served. To reserve a space, call (248) 652-5645, Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

MEDMAX

March will be a busy month at local MedMax stores.

An informative and fun Nutrition & Fitness Health Fair highlights this month's schedule of activities, and a variety of classes with topics ranging from smoking to homeopathy to vision screening are also on tap. The Nutrition & Fitness Fair will be conducted Saturday, March 21 from noon-3 p.m. at MedMax locations in Farmington Hills, Westland and Troy, and Saturday, March 28 from noon-3 at the Rochester/Troy, Taylor and Clinton Township facilities.

Participants can speak with professionals about personalized fitness programs, nutritional supplements, weight management, sports nutrition and more. Free blood pressure and spinal screenings, free product samples and free body composition analysis will also be available. Also, here is a partial breakdown of classes MedMax will offer at area locations during the month with date, time and site listed. The Farmington Hills MedMax (248-788-3000) is located at 29305 Orchard Lake Road; the Rochester/Troy store (248-828-2819) is located at 6843 Rochester Road and the Troy MedMax (248-583-6871) is located at 740 John R. Call the above numbers for registration information regarding classes at that specific location.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

AMERICAN RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE

Date: Friday, March 13

Time: 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Location: Troy

HEARING

FREE HEARING SCREENINGS

Date: Every Tuesday and Thursday

Time: 1 p.m.-4 p.m.

Location: Rochester/Troy

HOLISTIC PROGRAMS

INTRODUCTION TO ENERGY HEALING

Date: Sunday, March 8 and Friday, March 20

Time: 12 p.m.-1 p.m. (March 8); 7 p.m.-8 p.m. (March 20)

Location: Troy

Cost: Free

THERAPEUTIC TOUCH FIRST AID

Date: Saturday, March 28

Time: 1 p.m.-2 p.m.

Location: Troy

Cost: \$10

AWARENESS THROUGH MOVEMENT CLASSES

Date: Wednesday March 4, March 11, March 18 and March 25

Time: 7 p.m.-8 p.m.

Location: Rochester/Troy

Cost: \$10 per session

FELDENKRAIS WORKSHOP

Date: Friday March 6 and Monday, March 16

Time: 12 p.m.-1 p.m.

Location: Rochester/Troy

Cost: \$10

ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER (ADD) - NATURAL ALTERNATIVES

Date: Wednesday, March 25

Time: 6 p.m.-7 p.m.

Location: Rochester/Troy

Cost: Free

HOMEOPATHY

INTRODUCTION TO CHINESE HERBOLGY AND CHINESE HEALING PHILOSOPHIES

Date: Wednesday, March 4 (Troy); Wednesday, March 11 (Rochester/Troy); and Monday, March 16 (Farmington Hills)

Time: 6 p.m.-7 p.m. (Troy and Rochester/Troy) and 7 p.m.-8 p.m. (Farmington Hills)

Cost: Free

SMOKING CESSATION

INTRODUCTION TO NEW TECHNOLOGY FOR SMOKING CESSATION

Date: March 4, 11, 14, 18 and 25 (Farmington Hills); March 3, 10, 17, 21 and 24 (Rochester/Troy)

Time: 7 p.m.-9 p.m. (March 3, 4, 10, 11, 17, 18, 24 and 25); 10:30 a.m.-12 p.m. (March 14 and 21)

Cost: Free

VISION

VISION SCREENING

Date: Wednesday, March 25

Time: 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

Location: Rochester/Troy

Cost: Free