

## Rxbriefs

### Folic acid

Both men and women should increase their intake of folic acid to help reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke.

Researchers at the University of Ulster in Belfast, Ireland, found folic acid, a B vitamin also known as folate, and other B vitamins prevent the accumulation of high levels of homocysteine, a risk factor in heart disease and stroke. The risk of high homocysteine is similar to the risk of high cholesterol. While folic acid breaks down levels of homocysteine, three other B vitamins - vitamin B-12, vitamin B-6, and riboflavin - also prevent its buildup.

All adult men and women should consume 400 mcg of folic acid each day. Pregnant women need 600 mcg per day. Folic acid is needed before a woman becomes pregnant to help prevent neural tube birth defects.

B vitamins can be found abundantly in enriched grain-based foods, including bread, crackers, bagels, English muffins, flour, pasta, rice, and fortified cereals. Other sources of folic acid include legumes, yeast, dark green leafy vegetables, and some fruits.

### Chocolate Jubilee

The 18th annual Alzheimer's Association Chocolate Jubilee, sponsored by Providence Hospital and Medical Centers, will be held Sunday, Nov. 24, at the Ritz-Carlton, Dearborn, beginning at noon. Luncheon tickets are \$150; tickets for the chocolate tasting only are \$50. In lieu of a live auction, pledges will be solicited to fund the art program for Alzheimer's patients.

Named one of the "Top Ten" fundraising events in the Detroit community, the Alzheimer's Association Chocolate Jubilee has raised more than \$500,000 in the last two years. Notably, almost 85 percent of the gross revenues of the event support the association's programs and services. For tickets or sponsorship information, call (248) 557-8277.

### Red Cross

Become a Red Cross volunteer and help save lives. Opportunities exist in all areas.

The Southeastern Michigan Chapter of the American Red Cross is the organization that turns caring into action by providing disaster relief and helping people prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies. For information, long on to [www.semi-redcross.org](http://www.semi-redcross.org) or call (313) 494-2849.

### Manage stress

Assess your current stress level and explore techniques for handling stress, panic attacks, anxiety and insomnia. Bolton Center for Health Improvement will offer a "Stress Management Series" 7 p.m. Monday, Nov. 4 and Thursday, Nov. 7, at the center, 39750 Grand River Avenue, between Haggerty and Meadowbrook, Nov. 7. Instructor Carolyn H. Smith has a master's degree focused on psychology and anthropology. Smith has continued her professional training at Harvard Medical School Mind/Body Institute, the National Institute for the Clinical Application of Behavioral Medicine and the Academy for Guided Imagery. The cost is \$75. Register by calling (248) 477-6000.

# Need motivation?

A personal trainer just may be the answer

BY JENN KENNEDY  
CORRESPONDENT

Are you tired of trying to motivate yourself to workout? Have you tried different diets and exercise programs that just weren't giving you the results you wanted? Hiring a personal trainer might be what you need to become educated on the proper workout program and achieve the results you are striving for.

Regardless of age, everyone can benefit. Personal trainers can be great assets to your health and wellness. Some people choose not to hire one because it is not in their budget, or they think they can meet their goals on their own.

Before you think you cannot afford it or can get the same results by yourself, consider the benefits of working with these health professionals. They can assist with performing the proper technique of lifting weights or the proper amount of time or exertion for cardiovascular exercise and the right nutritional choices.

### MAXIMUM BENEFIT

"There are times when I see people exercising in the fitness center," said Teresa Magurna, a personal trainer at the Livonia Family YMCA. "It is great to see them in there, but they may not realize they are not performing the exercise to get maximum benefit, or even to avoid injury. That is where I can help them."

Personal trainers can also help you set realistic goals according to your schedule and lifestyle, and help motivate. They can educate you on the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle so you stay in shape and stay at your target weight without gaining it back.

"I like to educate my clients," said Tom Arbaugh, personal trainer at the Summit in Canton. "If they have not learned what they can do on their own to maintain a safe and effective workout program in the future, then I have not done my job."

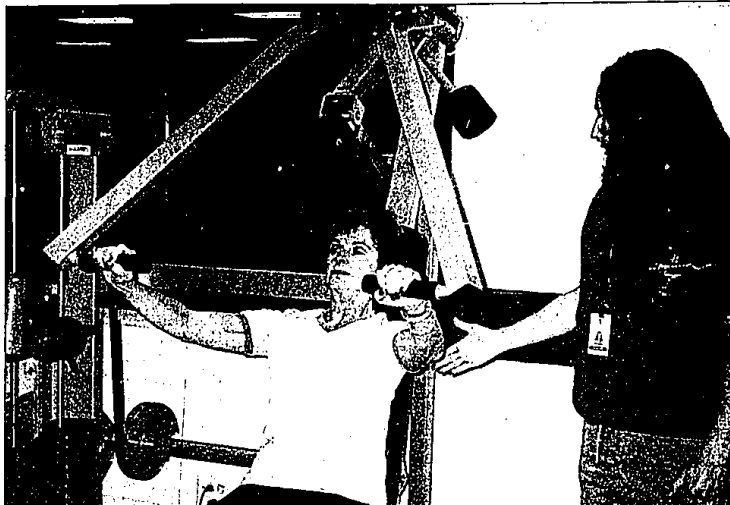
Whether you don't know much about exercise, or are an individual with medical concerns, an athlete, or completing your rehabilitation with a physical therapist, personal trainers can work with you. Most personal trainers offer a consultation first so you can get to know each other and discuss your current fitness level and establish realistic goals.

### GOOD COMMUNICATORS

Being a good listener and being able to communicate are essential skills a personal trainer should have. Your personalities should be compatible to get the most out of the time spent together.

"Personalities should be like yin and yang," said Peter Nielson of Nielson's Town Center Health Club in Southfield. "It is important that the personal trainer listen to the client, work to accomplish and be able to motivate him or her in an animated, non-threatening way."

A good trainer not only creates a positive relationship with the client, but also with his or her doctor, or physical therapist if there are medical concerns.



Sharon Wells uses the chest press machine under instructions from Teresa Magurna, personal trainer at the Livonia Family YMCA.

Leisa Golden of Northville has been working with Chris Jeffries, a personal trainer from Northville's Water Wheel Health Club for six months, two days per week. She has lost 12 pounds, and more importantly, reduced her body fat percentage by 10 percent.

"I had been working out for a long time, but I was really surprised how much I did not know before I started working with Chris. He is very knowledgeable, and he makes it fun."

Working with a personal trainer isn't always just using weights or the treadmill. It can involve strength and flexibility training with therapy balls, medicine balls and fun cardiovascular exercises inside and outside of the gym. A trainer should customize your workout.

### GOOD NUTRITION

Jeffries has educated Golden on the importance of the nutritional component of her program.

"I didn't realize I was not eating the right foods. I wasn't eating much and I thought I was eating healthy, but I was not losing weight," she said. "Chris has really been a great resource for me."

Along with being great motivators, having good communication skills, and knowledge of nutrition and exercise, personal trainers should have a CPR certification, be nationally certified and have at least a few years of experience in the field. Some nationally recognized certifications are American Council on Exercise (ACE),

National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA), American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), National Association of Sports Medicine (NASM), and Aerobics and Fitness Association of America (AFAA). Personal Trainers are also required to take a specified number of continuing education credits per year to maintain their certification, so they are frequently learning new material.

If you work with someone who also has a bachelor degree in exercise science, physiology, kinesiology or physical education, it is preferable, but not ultimately necessary.

Experience, knowledge, attention to safety and ability to get you moving are key factors in choosing a personal trainer. "A trainer can have a degree, but not the skills or experience to help you achieve your goals. However, on the same token, he or she could be without the degree and be very motivating, but not have all the knowledge to design a safe and effective workout specific to your needs," said Nielson.

### SEEK REFERENCES

Asking the trainer for references is encouraged. Obtaining testimonies of current or past clients is worthwhile. Ask around at the fitness center where you belong to find out who is recommended. Do your research and sign up for a consultation (most are free) to get to know the trainers before you hire one.

Some trainers or fitness centers may offer a few free sessions with the club

membership. Prices can range from \$25-\$200 per one-hour session depending on the trainer or club, whether the trainer works with you in the fitness center, or at your home. Working with a trainer in your home can be more costly. Average cost in a fitness center is most likely between \$30-\$60 per one-hour session.

Location is important, so call around to health facilities near your work or home, or ask to set up an appointment with a trainer at your current fitness center if you already belong.

You may even want to purchase two to three sessions first, before purchasing a package to see if your personalities are compatible, but be sure choose another trainer if it doesn't work out.

Don't feel intimidated by the thought of working with a personal trainer. A good health and fitness professional will be patient, encouraging and educational. If you want to improve your health and well-being, just like working out on your own, it takes time and commitment to change your lifestyle. Don't expect results in your home can be more costly. Average cost in a fitness center is most likely between \$30-\$60 per one-hour session. Location is important, so call around to health facilities near your work or home, or ask to set up an appointment with a trainer at your current fitness center if you already belong.

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# Mushrooms may help reduce breast cancer risk

Preliminary studies conducted by the Beckman Research Institute of the City of Hope in California suggest that the humble white button mushroom may play an important new role in treating or reducing the risk of breast cancer in postmenopausal women.

City of Hope, a National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, is a leading research and treatment center for cancer.

Researchers at the City of Hope, and the lead researcher, Dr. Shihuan Chen, a scientist in the department of immunology, have found that a substance in white mushrooms appears to suppress breast cell proliferation by reducing the level of estrogen, a hormone that can stimulate the development of breast cancer. The substance, yet to be identified, appears to inhibit the activity of the enzyme aromatase, involved in the production of estrogen.

### THE ROLE OF AROMATASE INHIBITORS

Estrogen is a hormone necessary for childbearing and bone and heart health in women, but lifetime exposure to estrogen may influence breast cancer risk. After menopause, the ovaries no longer produce estrogen; instead, the enzyme aromatase converts adrenal androgens into estrogen. Aromatase inhibitors limit the amount of estrogen being produced, thereby making less estrogen available to stimulate growth of estrogen-responsive breast cancer cells.

In vitro aromatase inhibition studies were performed by City of Hope researchers using mushroom extract prepared from fresh white mushrooms. A 50 percent inhibition of aromatase activity was achieved. Portabella and crimini mushroom extract also demonstrated significant anti-aromatase effects.



COMPLEMENTS OF THE MUSHROOM COUNCIL

Mushrooms may play an important role in reducing the risk of breast cancer.

The researchers are now in the process of identifying the specific substance or substances in mushrooms that suppress aromatase.

"Knowing the substances in mushrooms that slow down the production of estrogen could enable physicians to make dietary recommendations that have the potential for affecting the development of breast cancer," said Dr. Chen. "Mushrooms are not a miracle cure, but with cancer treatment advances are typically small, adding up over time to make significant progress in our battle against this dread disease."

MUSHROOMS: DELICIOUS AND HEALTHFUL3

Menty mushrooms are a welcome addition to any diet, having few calories (virtually fat free and low in carbohydrate) and contributing B-complex vitamins and essential minerals, including selenium, though to reduce prostate cancer risk.

For thousands of years, Eastern cultures have revered mushrooms as both food and medicine. Eastern tradition has it that there are more than 50 species with healing properties. Studies conducted over the past 30 years - mostly in Asia - have provided data suggesting that mushrooms or substances extracted from mushrooms may aid in the treatment of certain types of cancer, boost the immune system and reduce risk of coronary heart disease. Much of this research has focused on shiitake and maitake mushrooms. The City of Hope study is one of the first to focus on white mushrooms.

Mushrooms are exciting interest in other quarters, as well. Cancer Research UK, a private cancer research organization in England, has just published *Medicinal mushrooms: their therapeutic properties and current medical use with special emphasis on cancer treatments*, the most comprehensive review to date of the use of medicinal mushrooms in Japan, China and Korea. Many of the studies cited in the 250-page report focus on the ability of purified isolates - especially the beta-glucans and other polysaccharides - to act as anti-tumor agents and immune system enhancers. The Cancer Research UK report also reports research suggesting that medicinal mushrooms may also help reduce side effects from radiation and chemotherapy.

Mushroom nutrition and health information can be found at [www.mushroomcouncil.org](http://www.mushroomcouncil.org). Free booklet, *...And They're Nutrition, Too*, also available.