



UB Health Sciences Center News

University of Bridgeport

Volume 2, Issue 2
November 23, 2009

Fitness — Tips from the Chiropractic Clinic Staff

Fitness is one important aspect of health. When we think of fitness, we may naturally think of aerobic capacity, muscle strength and maintaining a healthy weight. Indeed, all of these qualities are important to health and wellness. Other subtle aspects of fitness, however, are essential to musculoskeletal health and, when compromised, form common risk factors for pain, injury and impaired performance.

Balance is an essential ability that develops through normal and varied childhood activity and play. Our unique bipedal posture demands excellent balance in order to minimize stress and strain on our joint and muscular systems. A special function of the nervous system called proprioception enables us to balance and assists in coordinating our posture, movements and all of our daily activities. Proprioception is the subconscious ability to perceive body position and motion without the use of vision. To understand proprioception, you may try the following test. Stand barefoot on a hard floor in a safe, open area. Lift one foot and notice how long and how steadily you are able to balance. Now, repeat with your eyes closed. It is recommended that you have a friend stand nearby for support if needed; open your eyes and put your foot down if your balance becomes unsteady. Most people will have more difficulty balancing with their eyes closed and many will find this test easier on one leg than on the other. Without the use of visual cues, the brain relies on internal per-

ception of body position and muscle effort to maintain balance. Specialized nerve endings or receptors located throughout the body give us this ability. These receptors are most concentrated in the joints and small muscles of the neck, in the low back, in the soles of the feet and in the skin. They continually inform the brain of the position and motion of every part of the body. The brain evaluates this information and constantly adjusts our movements accordingly through feedback. Some activities, like hitting a tennis ball, occur too quickly to allow for feedback. Our motor system is so skillful that many of our activities are controlled in a “feed-forward” or anticipatory fashion. Based on years of motor learning, our brain is able to predict the optimal coordination of our movements in advance.

Proprioception and balance can become compromised due to injury, pain and sedentary lifestyle. Like many nervous system functions, proprioception and balance function best when stimulated through activity, especially varied activity, and can become inhibited through lack of use.

Poor proprioception is a risk factor for impaired balance as well as for chronic spinal pain, chronic ankle sprain and knee instability. During a detailed chiropractic examination, simple screening tests for proprioception can be performed. If the balance system needs “tuning up”, it can often effectively be improved through various balance and foot exercises. Most

people enjoy these exercises which begin at the patient’s own ability level and may progress to one legged balancing on the floor, standing on foam blocks of varying densities, standing on a rocker board and the like. Such exercises play a role in the preventing and treating balance problems in older adults and can help decrease the risk of falls. However, proprioceptive exercises are also effective in improving performance in young athletes and in reducing recurrence of ankle sprains.

If otherwise appropriate, you can help maintain and improve your own proprioceptive fitness by walking on textured, uneven surfaces such as a grassy lawn, a sandy beach or a pebble covered trail. Such activity stimulates the balance system more effectively than walking on a tiled floor or paved sidewalk. Proprioception is often underappreciated because it functions without our conscious attention; however it is essential to healthy joint and muscle function, balance, speed and stability. UB Chiropractic Clinic providers are trained to screen for healthy proprioceptive function and to guide patients in safely re-training this system if needed. Ask your chiropractic provider if you are interested in how balance and proprioception might affect your health, well-being and activities of daily living.

**Contact the UB Chiropractic Clinic for an appointment:
203-576-4349**

Inside this issue:

- Foods For the Fall: An Acupuncture Perspective* 2
- Fitness for Your Body – This Includes Your Mouth* 3
- Herbs to Help with Stress* 4



Foods for the Fall

An Acupuncture Perspective

The eastern medical theory of the five elements provides a framework which aids one in making food choices that will be most beneficial to a person at a given time.

Within this Asian theory, there are five elements, or factors, which have an inter-relationship which must be kept in balance. The Five Elements are: Fire, Earth, Metal, Water and Wood.

The Fall is associated with the Metal element. During this time of year, it is recommended that people eat more foods from the Metal grouping and an ample selection from the Earth category as well. (Within the 5 elements, Earth is said to nourish Metal.) An example of food choices, with functions from Paul Pitchford's "[Healing with Whole Foods: Asian Traditions and Modern Nutrition](#)", would be:

- Brown Rice - increases qi, strengthens spleen
- Navy Beans - sweet flavor, benefits the lungs and spleen (both aspects of the earth and metal elements)
- Almonds - relieve stagnant qi of the lungs, transform phlegm
- Mustard Greens - influence lungs, clear chest congestion, improve energy circulation
- Onions - resolves phlegm and inflammations of the upper respiratory system
- Radish - transforms phlegm
- Pear - affects the lungs, eliminates phlegm

Avoid - dairy (which may add mucus/phlegm), meat (which may weaken the spleen) and sweeteners (which may weaken the spleen and contribute to dampness).

In general, it is most important to eat foods which follow the basic tastes which correspond to the element of the season; in this case you would want to eat foods which fall into the pungent (Metal) and starchy/sweet (Earth) categories and avoid foods which aggravate these elements - sugar, meat and eggs.



Mustard Greens Recipe (from http://simplyrecipes.com/recipes/mustard_greens)

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup thinly sliced onions
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 pound mustard greens, washed and torn into large pieces
- 2 to 3 Tbsp chicken broth or vegetable broth (vegetarian option)
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon dark sesame oil

METHOD

1 In a large sauté pan, sauté onions in olive oil over medium heat until the onions begin to brown and caramelize, about 5 to 10 minutes. Add the minced garlic and cook a minute more, until fragrant.

2 Add the mustard greens and broth and cook until the mustard greens are just barely wilted. Toss with sesame oil. Season with salt and pepper. Serves 4.



To make an acupuncture appointment, call:

203-576-4349

Fitness for Your Body – This Includes Your Mouth

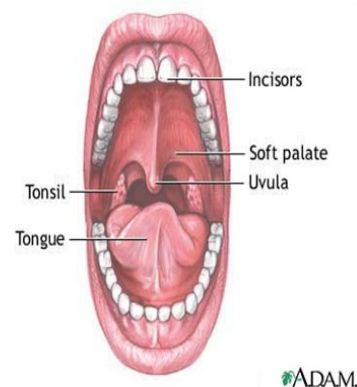
Marcia H. Lorentzen, RDH, MSEd, Director of Clinical Affairs
Fones School of Dental Hygiene

Caring for your teeth and mouth is just as important as keeping the rest of your body fit. Good habits are best started with the young child, with the first visit to the dental professional by age one, and regular examinations and preventive care every six months. Keeping the child's mouth fit includes brushing with fluoride toothpaste, fluoride applications in the office, and treating tooth decay as soon as it is seen. Children need to have help with brushing their teeth until the child's fine motor skills have developed, usually by the time they are able to write their name in cursive.¹

For the adult, it's never too late to begin a routine of healthy habits. Eating healthy foods, getting exercise, allowing for plenty of sleep, and taking care of your mouth all lead a person to feeling and looking better to themselves and others. Good oral care includes daily flossing. In fact, floss holds the #2 spot in health habits that contribute to longevity.

Here is the list of 10 Health Habits That Will Help You Live to 100.²

- Keep active in your vocation or avocation.
- Floss – every day.
- Move around – exercise every day.
- Eat fiber-rich foods, especially in the morning.
- Get 6 hours of sleep every day.
- Consume whole foods.
- Be less neurotic.
- Treat your body as a gift – every day.
- Be a creature of habit.
- Stay connected.



Floss is #2, but it certainly is in a prime spot to help keep your arteries healthy. A 2008 New York University study showed that daily flossing reduced the amount of gum-disease-causing bacteria in the mouth. This bacteria is thought to enter the bloodstream and trigger inflammation in the arteries, a major risk factor for heart disease. Other research has shown that high amounts of bacteria in the mouth often leads to thickening in the arteries, another sign of heart disease.²

“Whether you’re a child or an adult, when it comes to good dental health, there’s no magic pill or easy way out. The answer is good brushing, flossing and regular dental care. You don’t need to eat yogurt and live on a mountaintop, but you do need to floss.”¹

Resources:

¹<http://www.whhs.com/news?id=6763>

²<http://health.usnews.com/articles/health/baby-boomer-health/2009/02/20/10-health-habits-that-will-help-you-live-to-100.html>

Schedule a preventive dental appointment for yourself and your family at the Fones Dental Hygiene Clinic. We will take good care of you and help you focus on getting and remaining fit. **203-576-4137.**



University of Bridgeport

The Health Sciences Center
60 Lafayette Street
Bridgeport, CT

Phone: 203-576-4349

<http://www.bridgeport.edu/pages/4410.asp>

**Professional. Caring.
Affordable.**



The University of Bridgeport Health Sciences Center is located at the edge of Seaside Park on the shores of Long Island Sound. It is the home of the teaching clinics for the College of Chiropractic, the College of Naturopathic Medicine, the Acupuncture Institute and the Fones School of Dental Hygiene.

Each of these specialty clinics offers comprehensive services as described in this brochure. The Center provides numerous opportunities for medical therapies in one convenient location.

Please contact the Health Sciences Center reception staff at 203-576-4349.

Fones Dental Hygiene reception can be reached at 203-576-4137.

The dispensary can be reached at 203-576-4298.

Hours and Fee information for all clinics may be found at www.bridgeport.edu/pages/4410.asp



Herbs to help with Stress:

Stress is a major factor in our health. And this time of year, with minimal daylight time and the holidays, can add to that stress.

The term "adaptogen" was coined in the sixties by Russian scientists to refer to herbs which improve one's reaction to stressors. When one takes an adaptogenic herb regularly, the General Adaptation Syndrome is modified so that rather than a full-blown "fight or flight" hormonal and vascular response being elicited when an individual feels angered or threatened, a shorter, more controlled bodily response takes place. Blood pressure does not go up as high, sweating is lessened and the tendency to "fly off the handle" at minimal aggravations (such as a red traffic light) is reduced. These herbs help the body "adapt" more quickly to various stressors.

There are a number of herbs with significant adaptogenic effects. The most popular ones include Korean (or "Chinese") ginseng (*Panax ginseng*), Eleuthero (*Eleutherococcus senticosus*), Schizandra (*Schizandra chinensis*) and American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolia*). Of these, Eleuthero has a "neutral" effect on the body, neither stimulating nor sedating. The Korean ginseng and Schizandra are warming herbs with a mildly stimulating effect on the central nervous system, milder but similar to caffeine. And the American ginseng is slightly cooling, with a relaxing effect on the mind.

If you would like to explore the possibility of using an adaptogenic herb to help cope this time of year, please contact the naturopathic clinic to review your overall health and medication schedule.

For an appointment, please call: 203-576-4349