CREATE YOUR PERSONAL IN-HOUSE FITNESS TRAIL

Mary Maxine Mello, M. Ed.

There is considerable emphasis today on the positive effect of exercise on personal health, but for the senior at home or his/her family, it may be daunting and unrealistic to incorporate expensive trips to the gym or outside centers. Seniors often face unique life factors making it that much more difficult to maintain mental and physical stimulation. It may be that driving becomes unsafe, shutting down familiar trips to the grocery store, library and mall. Also, with the loss of one’s peer group, there are fewer visits and outings with friends. These are just some of the factors that can lead to increased isolation and, possibly, overall deconditioning. Consulting with a physician should always be the first path, but there are some simple steps an individual can take by thinking about daily, routine activities as an opportunity for a personal fitness trail at home.

Turn your world and routine into an accessible, fun and easy way to build more stimulation into every day. The metaphor of the fitness trail in the park or woods, where each stop serves to strengthen and tone a muscle group, can be applied at home. Think of your home and your daily routine as ways to physically and mentally strengthen yourself. Adapt your every day world to the inevitable life changes of aging.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

YOUR MOTHER WAS RIGHT... EAT YOUR FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Linda Jean, RDLDN

Are fruits and vegetables truly as good for you as Mom always said they were? Yes! Mom was absolutely correct when she urged you to finish all your spinach and to eat that “apple a day”. Eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables as part of an overall health regimen has been shown to have many health benefits.

Fruits and vegetables can help to reduce the risk for cardiovascular diseases such as coronary heart disease and stroke. They help to keep our intestinal tracts healthy and functioning. They can help protect from chronic disease as well as certain types of cancer. They provide vitamins and minerals and of course they taste good. Their assortment of fun colors can perk up meal presentations and add texture to meals.

How much is enough? Individual needs vary but a good guide is a combination of 5 fruit and vegetable servings a day. An average serving is considered a ½ cup for most vegetables and 1 small piece of fresh fruit or ½ cup cut up fruit.

What are “organic” fruits and vegetables and are they better for us? Organic by definition means grown in the absence of chemical or synthetic pesticides and fertilizers. Organic fruits and vegetables contain the same
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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Begin by mentally imagining the stops throughout your day as opportunities for physical and mental stimulation. Have you ever thought that the laundry could be a chance to fill that Clorox bottle with water and do 5 to 10 bicep curls before doing the laundry? Or, help straighten out that spine with a daily stop to press your back and head flat against the wall and hold. A straight back chair becomes a best friend as you get older as a solid base of support for a few side leg lifts (don’t forget to hold on). Use things and places you find in the house. Mental stimulation can often be overlooked. With your fitness trail, build in games that you may have started to overlook, many of which may be done alone. Pick a spot to work on sudoku or a crossword puzzle. Challenge yourself to a game of scrabble where you have to use all the letters. Ideas abound based on your life interests.

If you are a caregiver or family member, have fun with the fitness trail and make visiting day a chance to focus on these activities. You could even turn one of the fitness stops into a family stop, where maybe you bake or look at pictures from the past evoking stories and laughter. Just because you’re an older adult doesn’t mean that you cannot get enjoyment from adapting your environment to your changing world.

Guidelines suggest 30 minutes of physical activity five or more days a week for a healthy adult. Before you know it, you will reach this goal by building a few simple activities into your every day environment.

Mary Maxine Mello, M.Ed. in Therapeutic Recreation and M.Ed. in Creative Arts and Learning has been the Director of Recreation for 13 years at The Herrick House assisted living residence.

5 Mental Exercises for Your Fitness Trail

Do Five Math Problems Every Day
Count Backwards from 100 by 7
Play a Game of Cards
Do a Jigsaw Puzzle
Use your Non-Dominant Hand

LIFELINE CELEBRATES WITH FREE MONTH OF SERVICE

In celebration of serving 2500 active subscribers, Beverly Hospital’s Lifeline Program is pleased to offer one month of free service to all new subscribers who sign up for Lifeline service between May 15 and June 30, 2007 (a value of $37). Beverly Hospital’s Lifeline Program has been in business for 23 years and is the largest provider of personal emergency response service in Essex County. For more information or to sign up for service, please call Beverly Hospital’s Lifeline Program at 978-921-1697 ext. 398.
LIVING RIGHT ALONG

nutritious benefits as chemically grown but they typically have a naturally enhanced flavor and taste delicious.

With spring planting and summer harvesting in New England, there are lots of fruits and vegetables to try. Purchasing from local farms or farmers markets can be very social, educational and of course supports the local economy. There are often lots of interesting foods available that are specific to this region. Don’t be afraid to broaden your tastes by purchasing an item you have never tried. The local farmer will be happy to tell you about the food and how best to prepare it or break out that old cookbook and look for recipes with unique fruits and vegetables.

Native strawberry season is just around the corner! Think blueberries, raspberries, sweet corn, farm fresh radishes, lettuce and of course a wide variety of apples and other fruits. Try mixing a combination of items together. You never know what succulent tastes you will encounter.

Make it a point to try a new fruit or vegetable on a weekly basis. Be sure to share your experiences with friends. You will not only be adding variety to your menu, but will be healthier for the effort.

Linda Jean is a registered and licensed dietician at Ledgewood and Seacoast and has practiced on the North Shore for the past 25 years.

PARTNERING FOR SAFETY...
THE IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING A MEDICATION LIST

Diane Dick, Associate Vice President Quality & Case Management, Northeast Hospitals

The delivery of healthcare is very complex and involves many processes. Patient care often involves multiple caregivers at various sites with access to different information – hospitals, physician offices, pharmacies, etc. To provide the safest care possible, everyone involved is needed to help reduce/eliminate errors – including patients and families. One of the most common areas for medical mistakes involves medications. The patient who has a current, accurate medication list available for any caregivers is truly a gift.

Patients and family members have a vital role in helping us prevent medication errors by following these guidelines:

Find Out Everything You Can About the Medication

- Ask the doctor or nurse questions and take notes when being prescribed a medication.
- Make sure that your medications do not interact with one another. Ask your pharmacist to review your entire medication list. Be sure to include over-the-counter medications and herbal supplements.
- Try to use the same pharmacy for all prescriptions and refills and read all written information thoroughly.
- Make sure that your primary care physician has a complete, up-to-date list of your medications.

Keep a List of Your Medications

It is a good idea to keep an up-to-date medication list on you and have another list at home in a visible location, such as a refrigerator door, for use in the event of an emergency. You should include:

- Names of all medications (include over-the-counter and herbal remedies)
- Exact dosage, times, methods (pill, patch or liquid) and reason for the medication
- Your vaccination history

Today’s healthcare environment presents us with the opportunity to obtain and share data more effectively than ever before. You can be a part of this safety measure by ensuring that your medication information is current, accurate and well communicated.

Reference: Institute for Healthcare Improvement
**Beverly Events**

**BEVERLY SENIOR CENTER**  
June 7, 2007  10:00am-11:00am  
**Free Lecture: Relaxation and Stress Management - A Holistic Approach**  
Marianne Quirk, RN, RMT, CH  
For reservations, call 978-921-6017

**BEVERLY HOSPITAL**  
Luncheon Lectures, Beverly Hospital Lecture Hall  
June 15, 2007  11:30am-1:00pm  
**Natural Remedies - Medicines and Vitamins**  
Mauri Cohen, MD  
Luncheon Cost $6. RSVP to 978-921-1697 x 300 by June 12  

July 19, 2007  11:30am-1:00pm  
**Using Oxygen for Hard to Heal Wounds**  
Randolph D. Maloney, MD  
Cheryl Malmborg, MSN, CRRN, CWOCN, Wound and Hyperbaric Medicine Center  
Luncheon Cost $6. RSVP to 978-921-1697 x 300 by July 16

**IPSWICH EVENTS**

**IPSWICH SENIOR CENTER**  
June 19, 2007  1:00pm-2:00pm  
**Can You Hear Me Now? (overview of hearing loss/free screenings)**  
Annemarie Czarnota, Audiologist  
Call 978-356-6650 for information

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* Please note that all speakers are from Northeast Hospitals (Beverly Hospital and Addison Gilbert Hospital) unless otherwise noted

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**Danvers Events**

**DANVERS SENIOR CENTER**  
June 6, 2007  10:30am-11:30am  
**Free Lecture: Travel Issues Your Travel Agent Doesn’t Tell You**  
Alicia Gallagher, BSN  
For questions or directions, call 978-762-0208

**CENTER FOR HEALTHY AGING AT THE HUNT CENTER**  
Free Monthly Brown Bag Pharmacy Sessions  
Pharmacist will review your medications and offer suggestions.  

June 21, 2007  11:00am-1:00pm  
Reserve a 15 minute appt. at 978-921-1697 x 300 by June 18  

July 19, 2007  11:00am-1:00pm  
Reserve a 15 minute appt. at 978-921-1697 x 300 by July 16

**HERITAGE AT DANVERS**  
June 13, 2007  4:30pm  
**Free Lecture Series: Senior Supper Club**  
**How to Taste Wines (and Wine Tasting!)**  
Susan DeBake, Alfalfa Farm Winery  
A free light supper will be provided.  
Call 978-921-1697 x233 to register.

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**Gloucester Events**

**ROSE BAKER SENIOR CENTER**  
June 27, 2007  10:00am – 11:00am  
**Staying Strong As We Age**  
Brendan Malay, MSPT, CSCS  
Call 978-281-9765 for information

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*NEW*  
**EVENTS HOTLINE**  
For more information about upcoming events please call the Northeast Senior Health Events Hotline at 978-921-1697 x300.

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To update your information or be removed from our mailing list, please call 978-283-4000 x656.