There are many reasons to exercise: improved body composition, disease prevention, weight loss, muscular strength, enhanced quality of life, and too many more to name. We are all familiar with the benefits of exercise, but there is one simple reason that is rarely mentioned. We (humans) are designed to move.

Yes, we were designed to move. This may seem a bit odd especially in the technology age that we live in, when most of our daily tasks can be performed with just a few clicks of a mouse, or a push of a gas pedal. However, contrary to what most people 20 and under realize, is that during most of the small existence of human life on this planet people had to move to live.

Our thoughts probably take us back to the dawn of the human era when man had to hunt for food and ultimately survival. But what people so easily forget is that movement was an essential way of life not too long ago, especially in the rural south.

Just over 80 years ago there were no grocery stores, burger kings, cookouts, mini marts, or even refrigerators that were readily at hand. In order to eat, people had to work the land, tend, harvest, and find ways to preserve the crops. Don’t forget water. Indoor plumbing was not a normal luxury in the everyday household, so people had to walk outside to a running stream or well, dip a bucket or two, and haul it back. According to my grandfather, this was always done in the snow. Apparently it snowed 365 days every year. But I digress...

Since humans have been on this planet we have been constantly trying to make these essential tasks easier. As we have gained knowledge, and technology has expanded, our need for life-dependent movement has diminished. However, we see the results all around us: obesity epidemic, increased heart disease, increased cases of type II diabetes, and a lower life expectancy for our children.

Where is the proof that the original design of humans was to move? Look for the next segment of this article in the March edition where the proof will be provided.
Pet Health
Health Resolutions for Your Pets!

By Melanie Skinner, RVT

The New Year has begun and people across the country have made resolutions to eat better and exercise more. Our pets, however, cannot make these decisions for themselves, and they are paying the price for this inability. Obesity in our pets has become a major epidemic. As we have grown larger as a society, so have our pets, and just like in humans, obesity in animals leads to health problems such as skin conditions, liver conditions, diabetes and arthritis.

How can you tell if your pet is overweight? Look at it from above. Your pet should have a tucked-in waist – it should narrow in behind the ribs. Run your hands along your pet’s rib cage without pressing; you should just be able to feel the ribs but not see them.

Once you have determined that your pet is overweight, how do you get it to lose the weight?

Let’s start with dogs. The first step is to determine how much food your dog needs. Ideally, you will consult with your veterinarian to determine an ideal body weight for your dog and how much food may be needed to achieve that weight. If you can’t consult a vet then read the dog food bag. You will likely want to feed a lower amount than the bag says because you need to feed according to your pet’s specific needs and dog food companies tend to feed more than most dogs need. Once you have determined what your dog needs then measure the amount precisely. Many a time a client has said, “But I only feed him a cup twice a day!” When the vet or tech presses further, she finds that the “cup” is a jumbo Slurpee cup!

Sometimes, you just need to feed your dog a different food. Maybe you need to switch to a lower calorie food or substitute some of the dry food you are feeding with canned food. Dry foods have more carbohydrates than canned.

Exercise! Take your dog for a walk! You will feel better and burn calories and so will your dog! Arrange a “play date” with another dog, take your dog to the dog park, take him swimming, play fetch … just get him moving.

Decrease treats. Most people say to discontinue treats altogether, but you and I know that we can’t deny those sad, brown eyes when they beg for treats. So don’t deny them – decrease them. Break treats in half or fourths – it isn’t the amount of treat they get, it is simply getting the treat that makes them happy. Alternatively, you may give fruits or veggies as treats. My dogs love frozen green beans! Do significantly decrease the amounts of raw hides, pig ears and peanut butter you give. (Most people in the veterinary field don’t recommend giving raw hides or pig ears to dogs period.)

How do you get your cat to lose weight? Well, cats are special, as those of us who own them know. Consultation with your veterinarian is especially important in cat weight loss. Losing weight too fast can cause an obese cat to have serious health consequences. However, in some ways they are just like dogs. Change the amount and type of food and decrease treats. Get them moving more by getting a laser pointer, or a cat tree. I take my cats out on leash walks in our fenced in back yard. They love it. (Note, this requires some practice, you typically can’t just put a cat on a harness and leash and happily go out the door.)

As you can see weight loss in animals really isn’t really different than weight loss in humans. Shedding those extra pounds will help keep your pet healthy and with you for a longer time.
The Eat Smart Fruits and Vegetables 4-Week Challenge was held September 4 through October 2, 2012. The Eat Smart Challenge offered participants simple suggestions to increase their fruits and vegetables in their diet.

Congratulations to the Winners:

1st Place Winners
Karen Less & Gayla Green

2nd Place Winners
Delores Payseur & Paula Day

3rd Place Winners
Diane Metcalfe & Carol Faust

By Dana Rudisill, MA, HS-BCP, RD, LDN, CDM, CFPP

Fruits & Vegetables - 4-Week Challenge

Nutrition - Family Health Calendar for February

By Kim Pennington, MEd, RD, LDN

It's time to check in with those plans you made for healthy living back in January (hey remember those?). Use this calendar to get back on track!

February 1
Check your numbers! Choose cereals that contain 8 grams or less of sugar/serving.

February 2
Get your vitamins on! Cut sweet potatoes into thin slices, brush with olive oil, and season with a sprinkling of salt, garlic powder, and rosemary. Bake for 15 minutes on each side at 450° F.

February 3
Make double portions of healthy recipes that everyone in your household likes. Freeze half of what you make to use on days when you are busy.

February 4
Get your greens. Make an entrée salad for dinner tonight.

February 5
Take time to plan a few meals using fresh herbs. Include herbs in your menu this week.

February 6
Switch to lean or extra-lean cuts of beef.

February 7
Remember that the average garbage disposal contains about 1000 times more germs than the average toilet? Yuck! At least once a week, clean the rubber stopper with a diluted bleach solution.

February 8
Plan it. . . Sit down and enjoy at least 3 meals together this week. Studies show that when families eat dinner together, children do better in school, have better vocabulary, and seem to display more confidence than children who do not eat together as a family.

February 9
Breathe a sigh of relief. . . Know that all milk is tested for antibiotics, and if any are found, the product is immediately discarded. Do not pay more for milk labeled “antibiotic free.”

February 10
Serve veggie burgers with whole-grain buns and low-fat cheese for dinner tonight. Top the burgers with lettuce, tomatoes, and onion!

February 11
Make peanut butter and banana sandwiches on whole-wheat bread. They are a good and tasty choice for lunch or as a snack.

February 12
Find a recipe that includes tuna or salmon, and get the ingredients you need to make it this week.

February 13
Compare “diet” or “lite” foods to the regular versions. You might find less of a difference than you would expect.

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Stress Management

By Lenny Martineau, PhD, LMBT, NCTM

“Do what you Love and Love what you do.”*

The notion in “Do what you Love” is to:
1. pay attention to that which makes you feel good, and
2. put yourself in a position to experience that feeling more and more and more.

The “paying attention” phase is important, because the real reason that something makes us feel good might be buried -- layers and layers beneath the surface.

An example of a conversation with Self:
Let’s say that a person loves to eat chocolate cake, because it makes him feel good. When he asks himself, “Why does eating chocolate cake make me feel good?” he unearths several insights:

“Why does eating chocolate cake make me feel good?”
“Chocolate cake is a comfort food for me.”

“Why do I seek comfort?”
“Because I feel stress.”

“What is the stressor?”
“I have anxiety about my lack of financial stability (among other things).”

“Why is financial stability important?”
“Because financial stability would bring me what I want.”

“What do I want?”
“Well, what everyone wants: education for my kids, a house, car, insurance, etc., etc.”

“Why are those things important?”
“Because others will see that I’m successful, and that I’ve done okay with my life.”

“Why is that important?”
“Because I want to feel that I’m worthy, worthwhile, okay.”

“Why do I want to feel worthwhile?”
“Because I have feelings of unworthiness.”

“Based upon what?”
“Based upon my past. Based upon things that I’ve done, and things that I haven’t done. Not living up to my potential, I guess.”

“Have I done anything worthy of worthiness?”
“Of course I have.” (at this point, it is a good idea to make a list of all of those things).

“Can I do anything worthwhile today?”
“Certainly. I can give/receive in a more loving manner. I can treat people well. I can do small things that help to nurture my planet. There are a lot of worthwhile things that I can do today. The truth is that it’s not the chocolate cake that makes me feel good.”

“In fact, sometimes I feel bad after eating chocolate cake.”

“The truth is, what makes me feel good is ‘feeling worthy.’ The good news is that (deep inside) I know that I am okay, that I am worthy, and that I can express myself in a loving manner, right now!”

This simple inner-conversation shows us the importance of contemplating that which really, really makes us feel good. Once we determine what we really, really love, then the idea is to “Do what you Love.”

In the above example, the person in question could do something worthwhile, and then re-Cognize the Love inside of himself.

In addition, Diadra Price (Grace Awakening Essence) notes that there are things in life that we must do (e.g. paying taxes) that don’t (innately) feel Good. She mentions that, during those times, we can (at a minimum) proceed from a Loving mindset. Even those things that don’t feel Good can be experienced from a Good perspective.

Diadra might say that this Whole experience is Good. This Whole experience can be thought of as an Expression of Love, and we feel Good when we align ourselves with Good/Love.

When we don’t align ourselves with Good/Love, we tend to feel dis-easy. Even disease is nothing more than a signal. Dis-ease is a gentle reminder that we haven’t been aligning with our True Nature. From a wellness perspective, we can choose wallow in the Ease, and we can use the dis-ease and distress as a signal, a hint that there’s a better way to align with Ease. From a Higher Perspective, Diadra would say that It Is All Ease.

If (at a Higher Level) “It’s All Good,” then maybe everything here (even the “bad”) is Perfectly set-up for the experience of Good.

What feels Good to you? Who/what/where/when/why/how do you Love? How can you experience more of that?...to be continued.

February 14
Go ahead and have a special treat today! Chocolate has some MAJOR healthy qualities!

February 15
Use sports drinks only if you need them. Sports drinks are most beneficial for people performing continuous physical activity for longer than 60 minutes. People who are exercising lightly or for less than 1 hour do not need them.

February 16
“Ease the cheese!”. A serving of cheese (1 ounce) is the size of an adult thumb. Cheese is high in calcium, but often is also very high in fat. As Americans, we tend to eat too much.

February 17
Pause...taste...chew...breathe! Practice pausing between bites of food. Savor your food instead of rushing.

February 18
Plan for snacks like you plan for meals—before hunger strikes.

February 19
Switch your vegetable oil out for canola or olive oils.

February 20
Work on eliminating the words “good” or “bad” in relation to food within your home.

February 21
Prepare and cut up fruit into individual bags and put in fridge. You will be more likely to grab!

February 22
Replace one third of the all-purpose flour you use with whole-wheat flour in all of your recipes.

February 23
Add extra vegetables to convenience food, such as broccoli in macaroni and cheese or extra stir-fry vegetables in packaged meals, etc.

February 24
Do jumping jacks or stomach crunches, or run up and down the stairs during commercial breaks today.

February 25
Have a special treat today! (yes, again!)

February 26
Keep food records this week. Remember every bite counts!

February 27
Check your calcium intake. Is everyone consuming three servings of calcium-rich foods each day?

February 28
Turn the lights out early! Not getting enough sleep can adversely affect body weight.

February 29: Leap year
Look at your progress. How are those resolutions coming along after 2 months?

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