We all have questions, now here are the answers!
This edition is all about you, and the questions you have regarding health, fitness, stress management, beauty, and nutrition. Our experts frequently receive questions, but rarely get the chance to share the answers with others. We request that if you have any questions beyond the ones shared here to please let us know. We consider it an honor to share our knowledge and passion with our colleagues!

Nutrition - the drive-through habit

Answers provided by Kim Pennington, MEd, RD, LDN

Do you have some suggestions on how to cut back on the drive-through habit? I am making some good improvements in the fitness area, but am struggling with the fast, cheap, and easy drive-through habit as it is so convenient for a single person. My car is there before I know it! :)

My advice? Figure out if this is an issue about HUNGER, a HABIT, or possibly both!

From the hunger standpoint, many of us experience a mid-afternoon “slump” after 3:00pm or so. We may be tired and mentally drained after a long work day. This may be a time to reflect and determine if you are experiencing true physical or “stomach” hunger (an “empty” feeling) or “head” hunger-the need to soothe oneself, decompress, or de-stress (Read: just feel better!). Boredom can even be a factor!

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**Beauty**

*Answers provided by Rhonda Blake, Cosmetology Instructor*

**How do I know what type of hairstyle will suit my facial features?**

This is a very important part of the consultation. Students are taught how to determine the clients face shape and to choose styles based on their findings. If a client has a round face and wants it to appear slimmer, an angular cut would be more appropriate.

**What type of upkeep do I need to use to maintain the cut?**

There are many styles today that require the use of styling products and styling tools, such as blow dryers and flat irons. It is very important to address this issue before the service is done. It would be best to get suggestions from your stylist about a style that is not only flattering, but one that also suits your lifestyle.

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**Stress & Other Questions**

*Answers Provided by Judy Blankenship*

**What causes cramps?**

Of course it is important to always be aware that there are medications and some serious diseases that can cause cramps but in general these are the main “norts” that cause cramps:

1. Not drinking enough water (some medications and drinks such as tea, can contribute to dehydration)
2. Not stretching properly before an activity
3. Not getting enough calcium
4. Not getting enough potassium
5. Not getting enough magnesium
6. Not getting enough salt (We all DO get enough salt unless something like a medication is leaching salt from the body)

**What can I do immediately to recover from a very stressful situation?**

The C B A’s of Emergency Stress Reduction!

- **CHANGE** the scene: If possible, find a reason to walk outside for a few minutes (Maybe you suddenly need to get something from your car. Take your time.)
- **BREATHE:** Not just regular breathing...BIG DEEP LONG SLOW breaths in, and long slow exhalations - 5-6 times minimum!
- **AFFIRM** to yourself: (for example) “I am OK no matter what.” “I am OK no matter what.” “I am OK no matter what.” Smile even if you don’t want to. “I am bigger than this situation.” “Everything will work out for the best” or “This too shall pass”

Now, one more big breath in & out, a few sips of water and see how much better you feel!
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If this is about a habit, possibly a not-so-healthy routine has been established. It may be time to set up some rules behind the habit to keep it from getting out of hand. For example: You may decide that Wednesdays may be the only day you will allow yourself to go through a fast food drive-thru. Even then you should be aware of the menu and the calorie values so your food selection is not by mindless impulse. Go to the fast food website and check it out! Strive to keep the total meal count under 500 kcals and consider it your evening meal.

Whether your trip through the drive thru is about hunger or a bad habit, some kind of planning and forethought needs to take place to tackle your fast food foray. Keeping a single serving of a high protein snack like a mozzarella cheese stick, yogurt, individual serving of cottage cheese, ¼ cup of nuts or trail mix, etc. on hand can go a long way in helping stave off the mid-afternoon hunger pangs. Sipping on a cup of hot beverage like cider or herbal tea can actually help with satiety too, and may keep you from overeating.

It’s been said many times before, but planning ahead prevents eating pitfalls. Knowing that you already have a menu for the evening, even if it is simple, can help avoid the fast food drive-thru. Place your non-refrigerated ingredients out on the table before you leave for work. Post a menu card on the fridge for the week’s meals so your plan “greets” you in the kitchen. Good Luck!

Want to Reduce Stress?

Want to Reduce Stress?
Sign up Now! Manage Stress 4-Week Challenge
October 15 through November 9, 2012

The Manage Stress 4-Week Challenge will provide you with opportunities to practice and adopt strategies to reduce and manage stress.

Email Sue Shellman to sign up for this challenge. You will get Quick Tips and a Log Sheet to easily track your Challenge points.

The weekly strategies are easy activities that you can do anytime, anywhere. Come join us and see how much stress you can relieve to enhance your life. Sign up by Friday, October 12, 2012.

At the end of the Challenge, participants will submit total points from their log sheets. Prizes will be given to the highest point earners.

Make a lifestyle change and manage stress instead of letting it manage you!
Does Love heal? Does it promote wellness? Would you recommend exercising with a partner?

Great question, but I will have to defer the answer to the first question to another qualified individual, Phyllis Fujita. Phyllis provided us with a great article from the 2011 edition of Nursing Made Incredibly Easy that presented positive research in the use of animals in the recovery and therapy of patients. Many benefits have been identified with the use of animals in therapeutic roles such as: lower blood pressure, improved eating habits and reduced disruptive behavior in Alzheimer patients, and lower triglyceride and cholesterol levels. So does love heal? It appears so!

However, I would say that showing a sincere interest in others will help both your well-being and theirs! One of the best strategies when exercising is to do it with a friend, or group of people. A research study performed by Stephens and Craig in 1990 revealed that 65% of participants prefer to exercise in groups rather than alone. In my experience, often times when a person is exercising with a group that has developed a cohesive relationship, they continue with the routine not because of the results, but because of the level of enjoyment they have when socializing. So goes the old saying, time flies when you are having fun!

I am 48 and losing weight nicely, but I have saggy arm skin and, at my age, my upper body muscles aren’t what they used to be. What exercises can I do at home to tighten and strengthen my arms and chest? What equipment do I need?

I believe that a picture is worth a thousand words, so here are some bodyweight exercises that you can perform at home. The only pieces of equipment you need is yourself, a chair, and one (full) gallon jug.

- Close Grip Pushups
- Jug Kickbacks
- Jug Curls
- Chair Dips

Fitness Answers Provided by Jacob Surratt, MS, ACSM-HFS and Phyllis Fujita
Why is it so difficult for me to lose weight when I am exercising a lot, despite watching my diet carefully?

I will answer your question with questions! In order to provide you with an accurate answer I would need to know what types of exercises are you incorporating into your workout, how often are you exercising, and at what intensity is your workout? Let’s tackle each of these items one at a time:

**Type of Exercise:** Most studies have shown that incorporating aerobic activity regularly into a workout is the most successful for weight loss. Aerobic exercise can burn a tremendous amount of calories if performed at the appropriate intensity (which I will address below). However, if you are performing resistance training you want to make sure that the exercises you choose also burn a great deal of calories. For example, a simple bicep curl which only uses a couple of muscles will not burn as many calories, as compared to a pushup. A pushup incorporates many muscles, and the more muscles you use in the exercise, the more calories you burn.

**Intensity:** This category is what most people have the largest problem with, especially if they are working out alone. In order to see results you have to push yourself past your limits. On the other hand there are some people who “over train” which can cause injury and fatigue, and in the end have negative results. The best way to gauge your intensity level is your heart rate. It is suggested that you work anywhere between 50-75% of your maximum heart rate to gain optimum results.

**Frequency:** The American College of Sports Medicine recommends that adults who are wanting to achieve weight loss to perform physical activity 5-7 days per week, from 30-60 minutes per workout, depending on your fitness level. You mentioned that you are working out a lot, but your body may have adapted to this amount of work. If this is the case you need to “up” what you are doing to challenge your body and mind. If you are exercising five times per week, you may want to add one day. I know, most people would say “I don’t have another day that I can fit in a workout.” If this is the case, then try to increase the amount of time you perform each workout. Even if it is only a five minutes increase that extra five can make a huge difference in results.

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**Every Step Counts**

**Walking Challenge** - Join the Health Promotions Committee for Every Step Counts! This initiative from the Health Promotions Committee will help you to meet your wellness goals through individualized goals that you will set related to walking. The program begins September 17th and concludes on December 17th and will be available on all three Gaston College campuses. Participants will be eligible to participate in a rewards program as individuals or for division bragging rights.

To participate, simply fill out an application form and start walking. Walk for exercise, to lower blood pressure, to prevent diseases such as Diabetes and Heart Disease. Walk to and from meetings on your campus.

At pre-determined intervals, you will check in with your division’s designated coordinator to let him/her know how far you have walked. The division logging the most participants, most miles, and highest average miles per participant will receive awards at the end of the competition. For more information please contact **Jacob Surratt** by phone at 704.922.2283 or surratt.jacob@gaston.edu.