

HEALTH  
FITNESS  
NUTRITION  
WELL-BEING

# Matters®

## 10 FAST FACTS

It may take up to 12 weeks after starting an exercise program to see measurable changes in your body, so be patient.

**Cross-country skiing at a moderate pace** is a great aerobic workout and burns a whopping 550 calories per hour.

**Zinc-rich foods like oysters**, lean beef, turkey, lentils, garbanzo beans and sesame seeds help boost the immune system.

**Cold medications have side effects.** Decongestant ingredients like pseudoephedrine or phenylephrine can raise blood pressure and heart rate.

**Fresh Christmas trees can dry out quickly** to become a fire hazard. Always unplug your tree lights when you leave the house.

**Rosehips are an exceptional source** of vitamins A and C, and bioflavonoids. Enjoy them in a hot winter tea.

**Workers who work in cold temperatures** must dress properly for the conditions. Cold stress can decrease manual dexterity, posing a safety hazard in the workplace.

**Dates are a super holiday sweet treat.** They're rich in vitamins A, C and many Bs, plus they have a high mineral content and lots of fibre.

**Low air pressure causes** the tissues around the joints to expand, which may explain why people with arthritis say they feel a change in the weather in their joints.

**Don't take bismuth subsalicylate** (e.g., Pepto-Bismol) if you are allergic to aspirin or other drugs that contain salicylate.



**The New Year is just around the corner.** Are you going into 2011 with a positive attitude? If not, then now is the time to turn things around.

Putting a stop to negative thinking and learning to view things from a positive perspective can have a profound effect on your health and your work life. The simple act of maintaining an optimistic outlook has been linked to lower rates of anxiety and depression, reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, stronger immune systems and a longer life expectancy. An optimistic outlook can also have a positive influence at work, leading to increased job satisfaction and improved outcomes.

The difference between a pessimist and an optimist lies in how they interpret events. Pessimists see positive events as temporary and limited, and bad events as permanent and far-reaching, while optimists see things in reverse. They see positive events as permanent and far-reaching, and bad events as temporary and limited. Optimists also look for an external cause for events, while pessimists tend to blame themselves.

Optimism isn't denial. It means taking positive action to overcome setbacks rather than accepting defeat. Approaching challenges or

failures as learning experiences teaches you strategies and coping methods that can boost your skills and keep you healthy, happy and productive.

**Optimism can be learned.** Here are some tips to help you learn to accentuate the positive:

- Set goals and write them down. Everything looks brighter when you're working towards a goal.
- Never assume you can't do something. Challenge these beliefs.
- When you feel yourself crowding your mind with self-criticism and worry, stop and say "no" and then revisit things from an encouraging angle.
- Tap into positive stories from your past, rather than constantly revisiting unhappy memories.
- Banish negative self-talk. Learn how to recognize the things that trigger negative thinking so you can anticipate and redirect your thoughts in a positive direction.
- Think about your strengths and achievements, and then write down some self-affirmations based on these observations (e.g., I am confident). Repeat these self-affirmations two or three times daily.
- Practise reacting positively to new situations. In time, it will become second nature.

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## Cinnamon Benefits



**When you think of the holiday season** it's hard not to imagine the aromatic scent of cinnamon. However, there's more to this popular spice than its flavour and aroma. Derived from the dried inner bark of a tropical evergreen tree, cinnamon is a good source of manganese, fibre and iron. It also appears to have many health benefits.

An active component in cinnamon's essential oils called cinnamaldehyde gives cinnamon its apparent anti-clotting properties (it prevents blood platelets from clumping together). Cinnamon reportedly also has antimicrobial properties, stopping the growth of bacteria and yeast, including *Candida albicans*.

A dash of cinnamon may also help keep blood glucose levels in check. A 2007 study in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* reported that adding cinnamon to rice pudding significantly lessened the rise in blood sugar levels after eating. Further, a 2003 *Diabetes Care* study found that consuming as little as one gram of cinnamon per day was found to reduce blood sugar, triglycerides, LDL (bad) cholesterol and total cholesterol among people with type 2 diabetes.

## Good Carb, Bad Carb

**Carbohydrates**, the world's single most significant source of food energy, have been given a bad rap. However, is restricting carbohydrate-rich foods wise if weight management, blood sugar control and better nutrition are your goals? The answer depends on the **quality of the carbohydrates** you are eating.

Carbohydrates (carbs) are a category of macronutrients and provide the body with its main and preferred source of energy. When eaten, carbs break down primarily into glucose (sugar), which is absorbed into the blood to be used for energy to fuel the brain or to be stored for later use. Familiar carbohydrates include breads, cereals, crackers, pasta, rice, barley and other grains. Lesser known **carbohydrates are all vegetables and fruits**.

The quality of a carbohydrate is determined by how quickly it is digested and to what degree it influences blood sugar levels.

**Low-quality carbs** are quickly broken down and absorbed into the blood and require little muscle power from the digestive tract. They can cause a spike in blood glucose levels and can lead to food cravings. Low-quality carbs are typically highly processed, with fewer remaining nutrients (e.g., potato chips). **Low-quality carbs include**



**many breakfast cereals, white bread, white pasta, pop, cookies and candies.**

**High-quality carbs** are more complex in structure and take longer to digest and absorb. High-quality carbs naturally contain essential vitamins and minerals, help keep blood glucose levels under control and generally contain fibre. Fibre helps promote satiety and regularity – key factors in good health, and diabetes and weight management. **High-quality carbs include whole grains, legumes, fruits and vegetables**.

When making food choices, don't eliminate all carbohydrates. Instead, **think quality** and choose the good ones.

### WINTER RECIPE

#### Cauliflower Rice – The Great Pretender



Here's an amazing Asian-inspired recipe where grated low-carb cauliflower masquerades as rice. This dish delivers all the flavour of real fried rice but with a fraction of the carbohydrates, plus the cauliflower contains vitamin C, folate and disease-fighting phytonutrients. This recipe serves four as a side dish.

2 Tbsp.	(30 mL)	olive oil
3		green onions, chopped
2		garlic cloves, minced
3 ½ cups	(875 mL)	raw cauliflower, grated (about ½ head)
3 Tbsp.	(45 mL)	low-sodium soy sauce
½ tsp.	(2.5 mL)	fresh ginger, peeled and grated
½ cup	(125 mL)	diced cooked chicken or baby shrimp (optional)
3		eggs (beaten)

Heat olive oil over medium-high heat in large skillet. Fry white part of green onions and garlic for 1 minute. Add grated cauliflower. Stir-fry for 4 to 5 minutes. Add soy sauce, ginger, diced green onion tops and cooked chicken or baby shrimp (if using). Mix well and brown for 1 minute, and then push the mixture to one side of the pan. Scramble eggs in open side of pan until done but moist (add more oil if necessary). Stir eggs into cauliflower rice mix, remove from heat and serve.

Per serving (not including chicken or shrimp): 150 calories; 7.4 g carbohydrate; 7.4 g protein; 11 g fat; 2 g fibre; 503 mg sodium

**I went on a diet, swore off drinking and heavy eating, and in 14 days I lost two weeks.**

Joe E. Lewis (1902-1971) American comedian and singer

## The **Three** Omegas



**Omega essential polyunsaturated fatty acids** are vital for good health. However, since the body doesn't produce them, they must be obtained through food or supplements.

Omega-3 fatty acids play a crucial role in cognitive and behavioural function. They also help lower cholesterol, triglycerides and blood pressure while boosting HDL (good) cholesterol, reducing the risk of heart disease. Good sources of omega-3s are fatty fish (e.g., salmon, sardines and mackerel) and plant and nut oils, including flaxseed, pumpkin seed and walnut.

Omega-6 fatty acids stimulate skin and hair growth, assist in regulating metabolism and contribute to bone and reproductive health. The best dietary sources of omega-6s are oils that contain linoleic acid and gamma-linolenic acid, such as evening-primrose and black-currant oils. Spirulina (blue-green algae) is another good source.

Omega 9 is not an essential fatty acid – the body can make it in small amounts, provided that omegas 3 and 6 are present. Omega-9s

(found in olive oil as well as avocados, almonds, sesame oil, cashews, peanuts and macadamia nuts) lower cholesterol and boost the immune system.

Eating a diet that's low in red meat and high in fish, olive oil, whole grains, fruits and vegetables (e.g., Mediterranean Diet) ensures a good balance of all three omegas.

**NOTE:** Those with seizure disorders should consult a doctor before taking omega-6 supplements as there have been reports of these bringing on seizures.

## Tips For Controlling Dietary Cholesterol

A high level of **LDL (bad) cholesterol** in the blood can lead to plaque build-up in artery walls, narrowing the arteries and greatly increasing the risk of heart disease and stroke. Know your cholesterol level. While there are genetic factors that can't be controlled, there are dietary steps that can be taken to keep cholesterol levels in check:

- **Limit your intake of saturated fat**, found mainly in red meat, butter and high-fat dairy products. Saturated fats raise bad cholesterol.
- **Choose healthy polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats** as they lower bad cholesterol. They're found in vegetable oils, nuts and fish.

- **Eat two servings of fatty fish per week**, such as mackerel, salmon, sardines or herring (not fried). Fish is a good source of omega-3 fatty acids, which lower bad cholesterol and raise HDL (good) cholesterol.
- **Avoid trans fats**, often found in foods made with shortening or partially hydrogenated vegetable oil, including hard margarines, fast foods and many packaged foods. Trans fats raise bad cholesterol and lower good cholesterol.
- **Eat more soluble fibre**, which lowers bad cholesterol without lowering good cholesterol. Oats, barley, kidney beans, apples and pears are all rich in soluble fibre.

## Vitamin C FAQs



### What are the health benefits of vitamin C?

Vitamin C (ascorbic acid) is essential for normal growth and development, for healing wounds and for maintaining strong bones and teeth. It is also an antioxidant and may play a role in defending against certain cancers and reducing the damage caused by environmental toxins and even aging.

### How much vitamin C should I take?

The body can't manufacture or store vitamin C, so you must consume it every day – preferably through your diet. Children should get a minimum of 15 to 50 mg of vitamin C per day (depending on their age); teenagers 65 to 75 mg/day; and adults 75 to 90 mg/day.

### If I am getting a cold, should I take extra vitamin C?

The effectiveness of taking extra vitamin C to prevent or treat a cold remains unproven. Taking extra vitamin C rarely causes toxicity as the body cannot store it and will simply excrete excess amounts in urine. However, taking more than 2,000 mg of vitamin C per day can lead to stomach upset, headaches, diarrhea and even kidney stones.

### What are the best sources of vitamin C?

The best sources of vitamin C are fresh fruits and vegetables. Citrus fruits, bell peppers, tomatoes, berries and kiwi fruit are all good sources of vitamin C.

Friendship is like vitamins, we supplement each other's minimum daily requirements.

Author unknown

## Health Hazards of Outdated Makeup



**Makeup is expensive**, and it can be tough to toss it out after only a few months. However, the moment you crack the seal on a cosmetic product, bacteria get in and begin to multiply, and every time you use the applicator, you add more. After several months, that contaminated makeup could cause eye infections like conjunctivitis or painful red breakouts on your skin.

Liquid products that come in contact with your eye, like mascara or liquid liner, are most at risk of bacterial contamination. Change them frequently, and never pump the container or add any kind of fluid to thin them out. Store makeup in a cool, dry place. Discard any products that have separated, or changed in colour, consistency or smell.

At the store, avoid using opened tester products as they may have been used by dozens of people before you. Ask staff if they have samplers behind the counter that have only been tested using one-use disposable swabs.

### Recommended expiries after opening:

Mascara	3 months
Liquid liners	3 months
Liquid tints	6 months
Cream tints	6 to 12 months
Powder tints	12 months
Pencils	2 years, if sharpened weekly
Lipsticks	12 months
Brushes	Cleanse monthly



## Help for Dry, Winter Skin

**Cold weather, dry air and harsh winter winds** can take their toll on your skin, sometimes leading to skin that cracks, itches and flakes. Here's how to keep your skin healthy and hydrated, even during the harsh winter season:

**Drink plenty of fluids.** It helps counteract the moisture-sapping effects of dry air on your skin.

**When showering or washing your hands,** use lukewarm water. Hot water robs skin of moisture.

**Bathe rather than shower,** and add bath oil to the water.

**Use mild soap and body washes** that contain glycerin or plant oils, as they are gentler on the skin. Deodorant and antibacterial soaps leave a film that increases dryness.

**Exfoliate once a week.** Removing dead skin cells will help your skin absorb moisturizers.

**After your shower or bath,** pat yourself dry. Rubbing with a towel dries out the skin.

**Apply a rich skin moisturizer** while your skin is still damp. This will help seal in moisture.

**Apply sunscreen every day** – even in winter.

**Use lip balm** or petroleum jelly to protect your lips.

**Invest in a humidifier.** Humidity levels between 40% and 50% are healthier for your skin and your lungs.

## How to De-stress the Holidays

**The holiday season** is supposed to be joyful, but we too often run short of time, fill every moment with work and forget to have fun. Here are eight tips to help you enjoy the holidays with less stress.

**Plan ahead.** Many things can be done in advance of the holiday season (e.g., shop for gifts, plan holiday menus, bake).

**Budget.** Decide how much money you will spend on gifts, withdraw that amount from your bank, and leave your credit card at home.

**Simplify your shopping.** Shop on-line and have items delivered. Draw names so you buy for only one or two friends or family members. Contribute to a charity in someone else's name.

**Delegate.** Decide what you must do yourself, and then assign the rest to others.

Could you have guests bring a dish to a meal; hire a service to clean your house; buy cookies at the bakery?

**Get exercise** throughout the holiday season. Even a brisk daily walk will lower stress.

**Get your sleep.** Nothing will wear you out faster than sleep deprivation.

**Take time for yourself** to read, meditate, nap or simply enjoy some quiet time.

**Make a post-holiday list.** After the holidays, make a list of what worked, what didn't work and what you would like to do next year. Bring it out before next holiday season.

**It's not stress that kills us, it's our reaction to it.**

Dr. Hans Selye (1907-1982) Endocrinologist and pioneer in the study of stress

## Natural Remedy for a Stuffy Nose

### Are you suffering the effects of a stuffy nose?

While over-the-counter decongestants can provide temporary relief, they can also produce side effects, including sleeplessness and rebound stuffiness (especially with prolonged

use of nasal decongestants). Next time your sinuses are totally stuffed up, try nasal irrigation – a natural approach that relieves congestion without the side effects

Nasal irrigation involves flushing mucus out of the back of the nose adjacent to the sinuses using a saline solution (usually buffered with sodium bicarbonate). Many pharmacies carry neti pots (like small teapots) or syringe bottles that can be filled with a sterile saline solution. The process involves pouring the solution into

one nostril and allowing it to run out through the other nostril, flushing away congestion.

To make your own saline solution, combine 1 cup (250 mL) distilled water (or boiled tap water cooled to room temperature), 1 tsp. (5 mL) sea salt and 1 tsp. (5 mL) baking soda.

Using an irrigation syringe to flush the solution through the nose is an especially effective approach to clearing nasal congestion. While it may not sound great, this traditional treatment (if used once or twice a day) really does work.

## Generic vs. Brand-name Drugs



**Many people wonder** whether less-expensive generic versions of brand-name drugs are as safe and effective as the original. The answer is yes, as both drugs are essentially identical.

Generic drugs are produced to the same standards of quality as brand-name drugs and are chemically identical to their brand-name counterparts to deliver the same pharmacological effect. They are also identical in

dosage, administration, intended use, effect, side effects, potential risks, strength and safety.

Generic and brand-name drugs differ in appearance as they are not allowed to look the same by law. Generic versions of brand-name drugs may be different in shape, colour or flavour, and there can also be minor differences in their inactive ingredients and fillers.

The reason generic drugs are much cheaper than brand-name drugs is because their manufacturers have not incurred the research, development and marketing costs of the original developers of these medications. When a company puts a new drug on the market, it holds a patent that gives it exclusive rights to sell the drug. Once the patent runs out, other manufacturers can begin producing and selling cheaper generic versions.

Generic drugs are as safe and effective as brand-name drugs, and provide a way to significantly reduce both your prescription and non-prescription drug costs. If you require medications, talk to your doctor about possible generic equivalents.

**(NOTE:** Some people claim generic medications don't work as well as their previous brand-name medications. This may be related to individual tolerance or to the non-medicinal ingredients. However, biochemically, the medications are identical.)

## Pneumococcal Vaccine

**Serious infections**, such as meningitis, blood poisoning, ear infections and pneumonia, are caused by a bacterium called *Streptococcus pneumoniae*.

These bacteria (of which there are 90 strains) spread through close or direct contact with an infected person (e.g., coughing, sneezing, shared water bottles). Bacterial pneumonia, a serious infection of the lungs, is of particular concern in winter

**The people most at risk for pneumonia are:**

**Children under age 2**

**People over age 65**

**People with a weakened immune system**

**People with chronic heart, kidney or lung disease (including asthma)**

**People with no spleen or a spleen that does not function properly**  
**People with diabetes.**

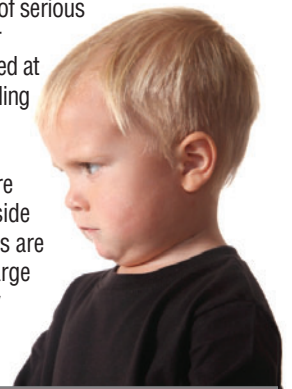
Pneumococcal bacteria have become increasingly resistant to antibiotics, which is why it's important for vulnerable populations to be vaccinated. There are currently two vaccines against *Streptococcus pneumoniae*.

The conjugate pneumococcal vaccine is for children under 24 months and should be given in four doses. It is effective against seven different strains of the bacteria, which account for approximately 85% of the cases of severe pneumococcal diseases in young children.

The polysaccharide pneumococcal vaccine is for

children (over 24 months), teens and adults and is given in one dose. It is effective against 23 different strains of pneumococcal bacteria, which account for approximately 90% of serious infections. A booster vaccination is required at 5 to 10 years depending on the person's lung condition.

Both vaccines are safe, with minimal side effects. The vaccines are available free of charge through your family physician or local health unit.



Money won't make you happy, but everyone wants to find out for themselves.

Zig Ziglar (1926- ) Author and motivational speaker

## Eat More to Lose Weight

We're often so focused on restricting calories as part of a weight-loss diet that it seems impossible that eating more of certain foods can actually promote a healthy weight, but it's true. Try these simple strategies:

- **Eat LOTS of fruits and vegetables.** Fill half your plate with vegetables (or fruit) at every meal. As always, stop when you're full, not stuffed.
- **Eat more lean protein.** Protein is important for satiety and preserving lean muscle mass. Turkey, chicken, lean meats, fish, shellfish, eggs, nuts, seeds, tofu and legumes (black beans, lentils and chickpeas) are great sources of protein. Include 3 to



4 ounces (85 to 113 grams) of lean protein in all meals and 2 oz. (57 g) of protein in your snacks.

- **Drink lots of water.** It promotes good hydration plus helps take the edge off hunger.
- **Get more calcium.** In addition to building strong bones and teeth, calcium plays a role in healthy blood pressure and weight loss. Aim for 2 to 3 servings of low-fat dairy/dairy equivalent products daily (e.g., milk, yogurt or fortified soy beverages without added sugar). If you can't get 1,000 mg of calcium per day from food, add a calcium supplement.

**NOTE:** One serving of milk products supplies about 250 mg of calcium.

## Smile Renovation for Adults

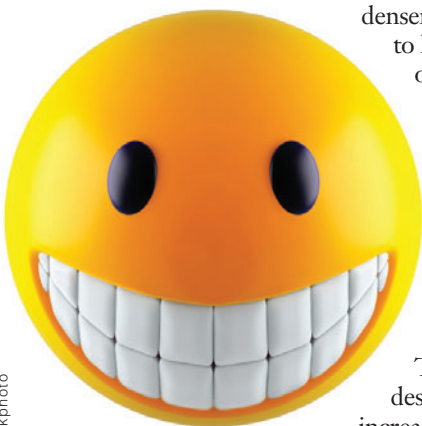
**Have you noticed** that more and more adults are wearing braces? Adults now comprise 30 per cent of the clientele at an average orthodontic practice – double the number from 20 years ago.

It appears that less obvious tooth alignment innovations, like porcelain or tongue-side brackets and removable aligners, have made wearing braces much more acceptable to grown-ups.

While most patients don braces primarily to improve their smiles, there are other important reasons to straighten poorly aligned teeth. An aligned bite improves digestion by helping you chew food better and straighter teeth are also easier to keep clean, reducing the risk of gum disease.

The process for correcting misaligned teeth is the same regardless of a patient's age. The big difference lies in the amount of time required to achieve alignment. A treatment that might last 18 months for a teen could take two or more years for an adult, largely because

the bones of the jaw are harder and denser. Adults are also more likely to have implants, gum recession or heavily restored teeth, requiring orthodontic work to be coordinated with the work of other dental specialists. Conditions such as diabetes and medications for osteoporosis or other adult illnesses can also lengthen or complicate treatment. These factors, along with the desire for less visible appliances, increase the cost for adults, which can range from \$6,000 to \$9,000.



## Nicotine Replacement Therapy



**Smokers who've resolved** to kick their tobacco habit in 2011 may want to consider using nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) products to help them achieve their goal. These non-prescription products, available in patch, gum, lozenge or inhaler form, reduce nicotine

cravings, potentially increasing the chances of quitting.

NRT products help treat tobacco dependence by acting as substitutes for the nicotine that would be inhaled through smoking, thereby reducing withdrawal symptoms. These products work best when used as part of a comprehensive smoking cessation program.

The nicotine patch, which can be worn on the skin for 24 hours at a time or removed at bedtime, works by slowly releasing about the same amount of nicotine a smoker would normally inhale in a day

Nicotine gum can be chewed whenever a person craves nicotine. People are instructed to chew once or twice, and then rest the gum between their cheek and gums for about a minute and then repeat. Nicotine lozenges also allow smokers to receive nicotine when needed.

Inhalers are another nicotine-delivery system, involving a similar hand-to-mouth ritual as smoking.

Common side effects of NRT include nausea, headaches, light-headedness, sweating, trouble sleeping, stomach problems and vivid dreams. Some patch users experience mild itching, burning and tingling at first, while those who use gum or lozenges might have increased salivation or bleeding gums. The inhaler can lead to short-term irritation of the mouth or throat, and coughing.

Nicotine is a drug that can have implications for people who are under age 18, pregnant or breastfeeding, or who are living with specific health conditions, which is why anyone contemplating NRT should first consult their doctor.

**It's easy to quit smoking. I've done it hundreds of times.**

Mark Twain (1835-1910) Writer and humourist

## How to Avoid Gym Germs

Gyms and fitness facilities must pay close attention to cleanliness to ensure the health of their patrons. A well-maintained facility greatly reduces the risk for transmission of communicable diseases – from athlete’s foot and colds to potentially more serious infections such as *staphylococcus* and *E. coli*.

When joining a fitness centre, inspect the locker room and restroom facilities. Look for hand sanitation stations as well as disinfectant spray bottles and towels throughout the facility for wiping down equipment.

If there is a hot tub or swimming pool, ask if the number of users is strictly monitored. In addition, there shouldn’t be a strong chlorine odour, and the room should be properly ventilated. Proper ventilation and air circulation in the workout areas are also important to reduce bacteria and mould.

### General Gym Health

When using workout equipment at the gym:

- Cover minor cuts or skin irritations before you use gym equipment

- Use the provided hand sanitizers or carry your own
- If you perspire heavily, keep a towel with you to protect the equipment and others from dampness
- Wipe equipment down with disinfectant spray or wipes before and after you use it
- Cover the seat of an exercise bike or locker room bench with a towel before using
- Regularly wash your water bottle to prevent bacterial buildup.

### Foot Health

Locker room floors and shower stalls are the most common places people pick up athlete’s foot (a fungal infection) or plantar warts (caused by human papillomavirus). To protect against these:

- Wear flip-flops in the shower
- Wash your feet with soap and dry them thoroughly
- Use antifungal powder on your feet
- Wear socks made from synthetic fibre
- Change your socks often
- Wash your gym shoes occasionally in hot water



## Crunches vs. Sit-ups

**Which abdominal exercise is better** – the crunch or the sit-up? The fact is that both exercises have their place in a healthy workout.

The crunch exercises only the abdominal muscles, while the full sit-up involves both the abdominals and other stabilizing muscles – in the chest, neck and low-back as well as hip flexors and lower-leg muscles (if you hook your feet).

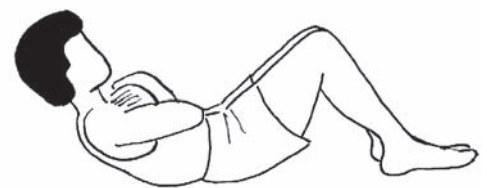
The traditional full sit-up is not a bad exercise. However, because it involves so many muscle groups it is not advised for people with neck, back or hip problems. Still, for those without these concerns, there’s nothing wrong with doing sit-ups. In fact, including crunches *and* sit-ups in your workout will strengthen all the muscles of your midsection.

**Proper technique for the crunch:** Lie on the floor, legs bent at the knees, feet shoulder-width apart and flat on the floor. Rest your arms on the floor at your sides, cross them on

your chest or hold your hands lightly at your ears. Raise only your head and shoulders from the floor to feel the abdominal muscles contract. Avoid pulling or flexing your head forward; keep your eyes looking above and ahead of you. Return to your starting position. Exhale as you rise and inhale as you lower

**Proper technique for sit-ups:** You can hook your feet under a secure object for more stability, but this will use muscles in the hips and legs, putting less stress on the abs. Place your fingertips at your ears, or rest your hands lightly behind your head, crossed on your chest or lying at your sides. The neck should be slightly flexed (head tucked forward) for less involvement of the back. Concentrate on using abdominal strength to curl your upper body off the floor until you are upright in a semi-seated position. Exhale as you rise. Inhale as you lower back to the floor.

Two to four sets of 10 to 25 repetitions (no less than twice weekly) for both exercises is sufficient to strengthen muscles.



CRUNCH



SIT-UP

I don’t exercise. If God had wanted me to bend over, he would have put diamonds on the floor.

Joan Rivers (1935- ) Comedian



If there's one thing to be learned from experiences like Hurricane Katrina, it's that you need to be prepared to look after yourself and your family in times of disaster or emergency. Keep a complete emergency kit on hand in your home (Go to [www.getprepared.gc.ca/knw/kt/kt-eng.aspx](http://www.getprepared.gc.ca/knw/kt/kt-eng.aspx) for complete instructions).

It's also important to be prepared for emergency situations while you're at work or on the road. Even events like a sudden severe storm or extended power outage can cause big problems if you aren't prepared.

An emergency kit is a must for your car, and while it may not be possible to keep the recommended 72 hours' worth of supplies in your desk, a carry bag with the following key items could be a lifesaver if you need to evacuate.

## Carry Bag – Desk Kit

- Travel-sized first aid kit
- Bottled water
- Energy bars
- Small flashlight (with extra batteries)
- Extra house and car keys
- Any required medication(s)
- Small amount of cash and coins
- Whistle
- Protective walking shoes
- List of emergency phone contacts.



It can be tempting to “borrow” items like flashlights or bandages from emergency supplies, so check your car and desk kits regularly and replace anything that has been removed, along with any medication nearing its expiry date. Replace food, bottled water and batteries twice a year

## Car Kit

- The Carry Bag listed items plus:
- AM/FM radio (windup or with separate batteries)
  - Emergency candles with matches
  - Blanket
  - Area maps
  - Pen and paper
  - Jumper cables
  - Flares or warning lights
  - Fire extinguisher
  - Rope
  - Small shovel
  - Scraper and snowbrush
  - Windshield fluid and antifreeze
  - Emergency sign
  - Salt, sand or cat litter
  - Winter clothing and shoes.

**TIP:** Wondering what to get for the person who has everything? Emergency kits make excellent holiday season gifts.

## Shovelling Snow Safely

**Shovelling snow** is an intense workout, particularly for those who are less fit. Back and shoulder injuries from improper shovelling are common, and unfit or unhealthy individuals could be risking a heart attack.

Before you tackle the snow, warm up your muscles. Spend a few minutes doing arm circles, shoulder rotations, marching on the spot or light jumping jacks. Your circulation must be increased to warm your muscles and prepare them for more intense work.

Use the right tools. Lighter, sturdier snow shovels reduce the overall weight you're lifting. Make sure the handle is the right length.

It should be long enough to allow your back to remain as straight as possible while shovelling. To determine the right length, grab the shovel with one hand where the blade meets the shaft. With the other hand, grasp the handhold. Your hand spacing should be slightly wider than your shoulder width. Tip: Spraying the shovel with vegetable oil helps the snow slide off more easily.

Use the right technique. Push the blade directly ahead of you into the snow. Shovelling to the left or right strains the back. Lift the load using your leg muscles, not your back. When dumping snow off the blade, take small steps to pivot your entire body. Position yourself so that you are dumping the snow directly in front of you. Twisting at the waist will strain muscles.



Also, don't try to move too much snow at once.

Work slowly, especially if you are unfit. Take frequent breaks (every 5 to 10 minutes). Always stretch your tense muscles afterward. Remember staying active year round is the best way to prevent injury when you suddenly have to exert yourself.

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