

WELLNESS CONNECTION

Live well. Work well.

FEBRUARY 2020

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Check the event calendars at your university to find great opportunities for wellness activities in and around your work community!



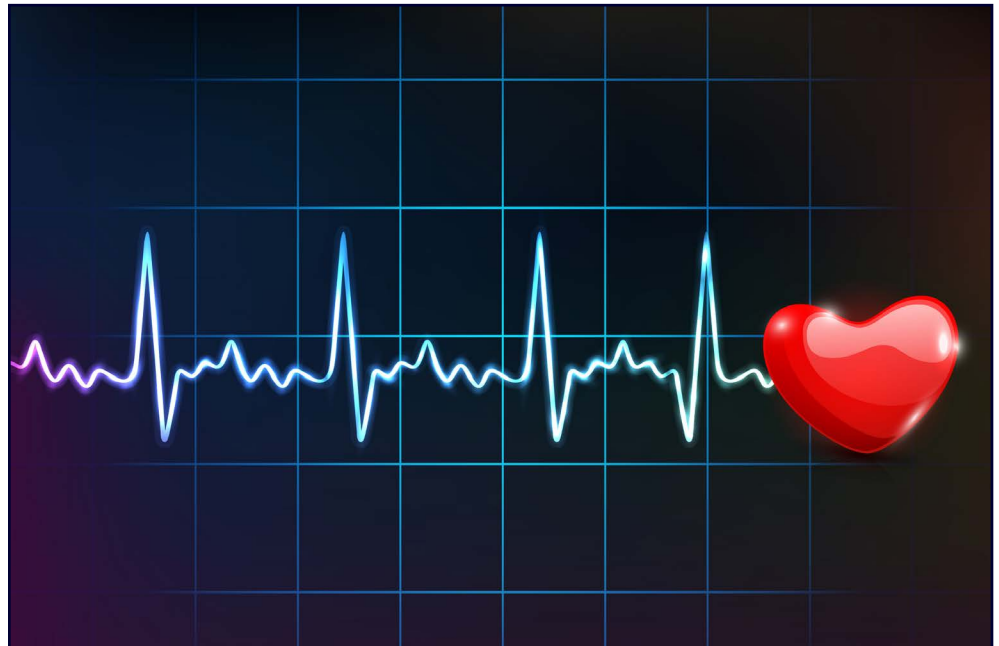
[UIUC Campus Wellbeing Service Wellness Events](#)



[UIC Wellness Center Calendar of Events](#)



[UIS Connection Events Calendar](#)



February Wellness Focus: Heart Health

The February issue of the Wellness Connection is dedicated to the topic of Heart Health, with each section of this month's newsletter centering around the theme of promoting a heart-healthy lifestyle!

"Inspire to Move" focuses on great exercise tips to improve cardiovascular fitness, and "Nourishing You" features another quick, easy, and tasty recipe that promotes heart health. "Healthy Harmony" brings mindfulness to the forefront to help reduce the workplace stress that we all feel during those busy or hectic days, and "Good Decisions" outlines six key strategies to promoting a heart-healthy lifestyle.

Lastly, this month's "Employee Spotlight" is an enlightening Q&A with UIC professor and UI Health cardiologist, Dr. Joan Briller.

We hope that you find the information in this issue helpful as we collectively turn our focus to this most vital area of overall health and wellness.

- System Office Wellness Committee

▶ FEEDBACK



Contact the System Office Wellness Committee:

[**SOWellness@uillinois.edu**](mailto:SOWellness@uillinois.edu)



READ TIME:
5 MINUTES

February is Heart Health Month, LOVE YOUR HEART!

By Lydia Schillinger

Exercise intensity: How to measure it

You put on your new workout clothes and head off to the gym with your 80s sweatband around your head. You get to class and tell yourself you are ready for this. You choose a spot in the room towards the back and begin to move with the instructor. You start to feel a little warm. You can feel your heart beating in your chest, holding a conversation is getting harder and harder and your breathing is heavy. Then you find out that was only the warmup! Stick with it, trust me your feelings are normal, the movements will get easier the more and more you try them. Congratulate yourself for getting to the class and trying something new. I am proud of you.

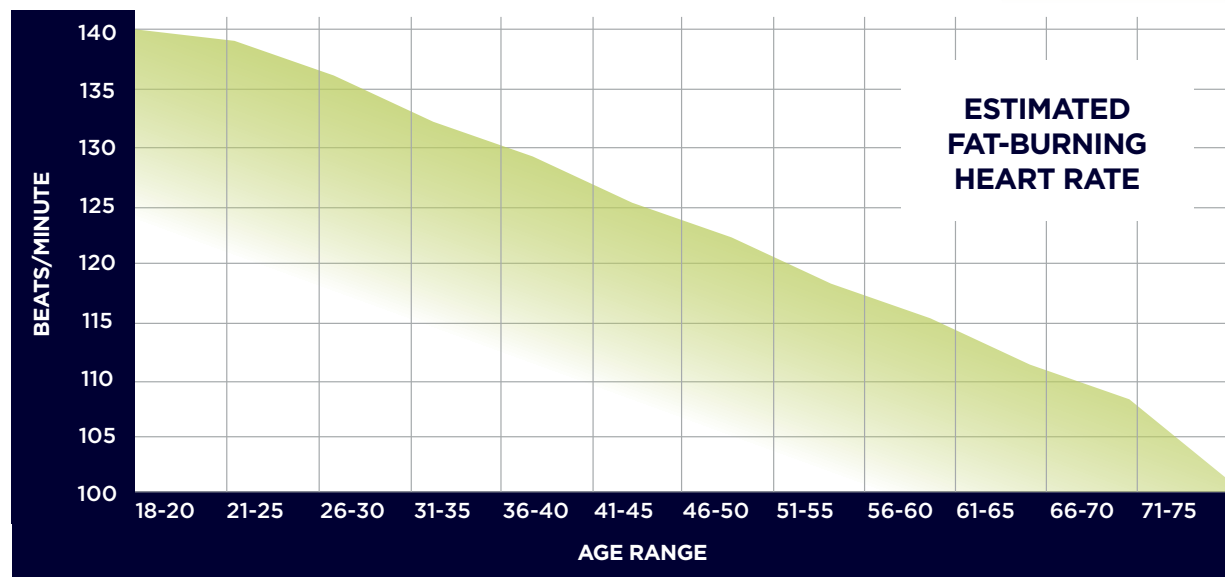
Aerobic activity, weight training, and vigorous walking all get your heart rate up and help you burn calories. To get the maximum benefit for your body while you are doing an activity try to get a target heartrate that is right for your age group. Choose the intensity that is right for you.



Fat-burning heart rate chart

When using the following chart, keep in mind that the older you are, the lower your fat-burning heart rate. For example, if you're 32, you'd want to use the higher number in the 31 to 35 range for your fat-burning heart rate.

Certain medications may affect your heart rate, too, so speak with your doctor before beginning any exercise routine.



What really Happens to your body when you start exercising?

I recommend you take a few minutes to read this article and check out this website for helpful tips on how to start exercising. Exercise helps your heart, your muscles, your brain, your immune system, your hormones, your mood, your sleep, your energy levels... the list goes on and on. When you exercise, you will FEEL BETTER. Any time is a great time to start a new workout, but the new year is an especially great time. The new year can be a new you. Keep up with your activity for four weeks and you will see and feel the results.



If you want to change you have to change.

Let us know your progress and/or a favorite activity you started in the new year and we may feature you in an upcoming Wellness Connection! ■

NOURISHING YOU



READ TIME:
3 MINUTE



CONTENT SOURCE:
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Grilled Chicken with Mango Avocado Salsa

Ingredients for Mango Avocado Salsa:

- Salt to taste
- 1 cup diced mango
- 1 cup diced avocado
- Juice of 1 lime
- ½ cup red bell pepper
- ¼ cup diced cilantro

Ingredients for Spiced Grilled Chicken:

- 4 thin boneless skinless chicken breasts
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 2 teaspoons chili powder
- Salt to taste

Instructions:

1. Heat a grill over medium-high heat. Drizzle the olive oil over the chicken breasts and sprinkle with the chili powder and salt to taste.
2. Grill for 4-5 minutes on each side or until cooked through.
3. While chicken is cooking, combine the mango, avocado, red bell pepper, and cilantro in a bowl. Stir in lime juice and salt to taste.
4. Spoon the salsa over the chicken and serve.

Recipe Notes:

- Add diced red onion to the mango avocado salsa, if preferred.
- Serve with a side of brown rice or quinoa.

Nutrition Information:

Calories: 401kcal | Carbohydrates: 12g | Protein: 28g | Fat: 10g | Saturated Fat: 1g | Cholesterol: 72mg | Sodium: 151mg | Potassium: 658mg | Fiber: 6g | Sugar: 32g | Vitamin A: 7260IU | Vitamin C: 38.5mg | Calcium: 45mg | Iron: 3.7mg ■



Photo Credit: HealthyFitnessMeals.com

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

**BELIEVE IN YOURSELF
AND ALL THAT YOU ARE.
KNOW THAT THERE IS
SOMETHING INSIDE OF
YOU THAT IS GREATER
THAN ANY OBSTACLE.**

CHRISTIAN D. LARSON

READ TIME:
5 MINUTESCONTENT SOURCE:
[CLICK HERE](#)

Using Mindfulness in the Workplace

By Jackie Billhymer

The workforce of today is busier than ever and that means we are under an incredible amount of stress on any given day. Technology has allowed us to be the ultimate multi-taskers and what has become the norm comes at a cost. Constantly working in a thousand different directions will eventually take its toll on your health and well-being. Stress can raise your risk for high blood pressure and increased cholesterol levels, so you must find ways to manage it. **Maybe it's time to bring manic multitasking to an end and focus on mindfulness instead.**

Mindfulness is a way to keep us present in the moment and concentrate on one thing at a time. It is being aware of and accepting your thoughts, emotions and sensations as you experience them. You have both positive and negative thoughts at any point in time and mindfulness helps you determine what really matters in that moment. Mindfulness is not the same as meditation in that you don't need to clear your mind of all thoughts; it is more about being aware of your thoughts and identifying what you can release to make room for more positive thoughts.

The University of California Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center has a [mindfulness quiz](#) that can help you be more aware of mindfulness. The real benefit to mindfulness is that you can practice it at any place and any time. When you're stressed, one of the easiest things you can do immediately is **practice controlled breathing**. Take a long, slow breath in through your nose, filling up your lungs, hold your breath to the count of "three". Then exhale slowly through pursed lips, while relaxing your face, jaw, shoulders and stomach. Breathing like this reduces anxiety, slows the heart rate and lowers blood pressure. It also brings more oxygen flow to your body. **In a busy workplace, building in deliberate time to pause and breathe is critical to both the well-being of individual employees and the collective health of the organization.**



Sensory exercises can also help – and be practiced almost anywhere. Place a small object in front of you and focus on how it looks, feels in your hand, smells or tastes (depending on the object). This exercise results in being aware of your senses and the present moment.

Mindfulness doesn't have to take a lot of time or be an intense lesson. You can incorporate it easily into your daily routine and use it as a tool to manage stress. Lowering your stress levels can lower your risk for heart disease risk factors like high blood pressure. You might find that you also have a more positive mindset, are more productive, and have better interactions with the people around you. Try it!! ■



READ TIME:
3 MINUTES

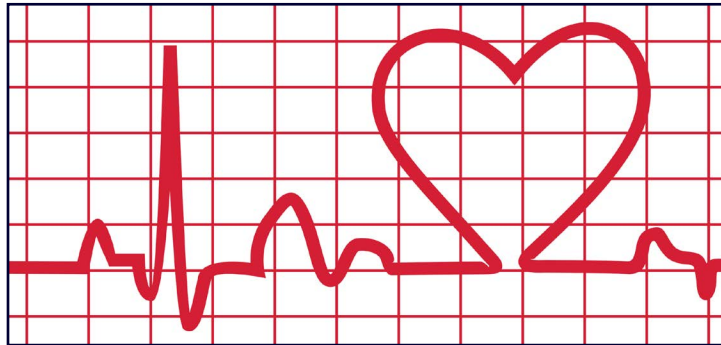


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[CLICK HERE](#)

Six Strategies to a Heart-Healthy Lifestyle

By Christina A. Worthington

Did you know that heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States? Heart disease and the conditions that it encompasses, takes the lives of 1 in 4 Americans each year. But, when you choose healthy behaviors, you can lower your heart disease risk while also preventing other serious chronic conditions like Type 2 diabetes and some kinds of cancer. These six strategies can help you live a heart-healthy lifestyle!



Learn Your Health History

Not all “risk factors” of heart disease are in your control. Genetics play an active part in your health. Talk to family members about your family health history. Follow up with your medical provider about health concerns derived from those conversations.

Eat a Healthy Diet

Choose healthy meals and snacks to help prevent heart disease and its complications. Be sure to eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as high-fiber and low-sodium options, and fewer processed foods.

Move More, Sit Less

Regular physical activity helps improve your overall health, fitness, and quality of life. Not only will it help reduce your risk of heart disease, but also feelings of depression and anxiety. Get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity every week, plus muscle-strengthening activities at least two days a week.

Quit Smoking

Smoking is a major cause of cardiovascular diseases (CVD) and causes one of every three deaths from CVD. Each University of Illinois System campus - [Urbana-Champaign](#), [Chicago](#), and [Springfield](#) - has tobacco cessation resources available to employees.

Take Medication as Directed

If you take medicine to treat high cholesterol, high blood pressure, or diabetes, follow your doctor’s instructions carefully. Always ask questions if you don’t understand something. Never stop taking your medicine without talking to your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

Rethink Your Drink

Start your day by drinking a large glass of water and continue to drink water throughout the day! Substitute water for sugary drinks to reduce calories. If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation as alcohol naturally raises blood pressure.

For more information on living a heart-healthy lifestyle, please visit the [Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s website](#). ■



READ TIME:
8 MINUTES

Q&A with Dr. Joan Briller

Dr. Joan Briller, a cardiologist at UI Health recently spoke with the Wellness Connection's Seth Yoder to talk about her areas of expertise.

Question:

Tell us about your background, what inspired you to pursue a career in Cardiology?

Answer:

I began my career in the field of anthropology. While working in Brazil I was introduced to public health officials who inspired me to pursue a career in medicine. I completed my Medical Degree at the University of Connecticut, then relocated to Chicago to complete my residency at Northwestern University Medical Center. During my residency I became fascinated by the heart and how it operated similarly to a pump. At U. of C. in cardiology training, I became increasingly aware of the void in research on cardiovascular disease in women and since then I have made it my goal to bring more attention the area of women's heart health. I have been a cardiologist at UI Health specializing in women's cardiovascular disease, heart disease effecting pregnancy and echocardiography for more than 20 years.

Question:

To what factors do you attribute most heart symptoms: age, gender, weight, stress levels, eating habits, amount of exercise?

Answer:

All of these factors contribute to heart disease. The most risk common factors and easiest to identify and correct or treat are: high blood pressure, smoking, high cholesterol, diabetes, family history, sedentary lifestyle, and obesity. Stress plays an important role too, but may be harder for us to control, although exercise and meditation are helpful. Some pregnancy related complications such as preeclampsia and gestational diabetes are unique risk factors for women. We now also recognize that collagen vascular disease and some cancer therapies can contribute.

Question:

It is often said that sitting in your office all day is as bad as smoking. With that in mind, what would you recommend to employees who work in an office setting to improve the health of their heart?

Answer:

Everyone that works indoors, particularly in front of a computer, should find ways to stand and move. If you are unable to obtain a standing desk or get outdoors, indoor solutions could include walking up and down a flight of stairs or simply making a loop around the office. People should be encouraged to take meetings outside and incorporate some type of movement into work-related activities.

Question:

With our busy schedules, it can be hard to find time to exercise. Do you have any recommendations on simple exercises people can do to improve the overall health of their heart?

Answer:

Sitting most of the day is certainly not good for any one. We recommend that you incorporate 150 minutes of moderate exercise or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise into your week. This can be broken up into sessions as short as 10 minutes and still give benefit. Moderate exercise is an activity you can do while still maintaining a conversation but should involve some effort. Vigorous exercise is an activity where it would be challenging to maintain a conversation. When choosing physical activities it's important to find something you enjoy; this leads to greater satisfaction and motivation. Remember when time is tight that some activity is better than none.

Question:

What types of food should we eat more and less of?

Answer:

A good rule of thumb is to include more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and less processed foods. A simple way to think about your day



Dr. Briller

to day diet is to divide your plate into half vegetables, a quarter protein, and a quarter whole grains. It is also a good idea to moderate the amount of salt you eat. When it comes it making changes to your diet, similar to exercise it is important to set reasonable expectations. Start small with one change towards a healthier diet, then when you are comfortable with that one, you can make the next one. A heart healthy diet is for your lifetime not for a week or two.

Question:

At what age do you recommend seeing a doctor to discuss heart health? And how often?

Answer:

No patient is ever too young to meet with a health care provider to discuss heart health. When you visit your family or primary doctor to discuss heart health you should ask your doctor about any concerning symptoms. These might include "classic" symptoms like chest discomfort with exercise, but women often report less typical symptoms like fatigue. Moreover, if you are having the following symptoms then you should seek medical treatment as soon as possible: chest discomfort, shortness of breath, not able to complete normal physical activities, marked leg swelling, heart palpitations to the point of feeling like you might faint. You should conclude your discussion with questions about risk factor prevention and treatment for symptoms. ■