

# Peaking Interests

Apex Physical Therapy's  
patient newsletter

Fall 2009 Volume five Issue one

## The Benefits of Fitness

*How exercise can combat a range of health concerns, from heart disease to osteoporosis*

By Kamala Bongiorno, PT

Don't feel bad! It has happened to the best of us. You start an exercise program only to watch your best intentions dissipate after a few sessions. Maybe you've never exercised before and you're unsure of how to begin. Or perhaps an old injury has left you frightened that physical activity will only exacerbate your problem.

Regardless of the barriers that have prevented you in the past, it's never too late to start exercising. As plentiful as the excuses to postpone exercising may be, there's an equal abundance of advantages that come with beginning an exercise program.

Most of us are familiar with the more obvious benefits of exercise – weight control, improved mood via increased serotonin production, and a general boost in self-esteem. But many fail to recognize the numerous ways exercise can combat a range of health problems, from heart disease to osteoporosis.

First and foremost, it's next to impossible to ignore the correlation between exercise and weight loss. With the average American adult's

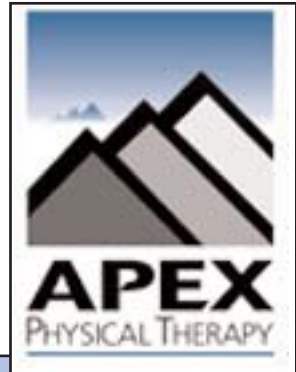
weight at an all-time high, there has never been a more urgent time to promote greater physical activity.

In fact, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the number of obese American adults doubled during the time period from 1980 to 2004. And while the prevalence of obesity hasn't increased in recent years, the organization still views the number of obese American adults as high – at an average of 26 percent in 2008.

As a result of this upsurge in the average weight of the American adult, there has been a corresponding increase in medical problems directly related to obesity. Some of the more serious health issues include coronary heart disease, stroke, Type II diabetes, high cholesterol, hypertension and osteoarthritis. Medical problems like sleep apnea and certain gynecological concerns have also been causally related to obesity.

According to the CDC, heart disease is the leading cause of death among both men and women in the United States. Heart disease is a general term that incorporates a number of more specific conditions, the most common of which is coronary heart

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### Now Serving Five Locations

**Royersford**  
341 10th Avenue  
Suite 101

Royersford, PA 19468  
610-792-8100

**Blue Bell**  
686 DeKalb Pike  
Suite 101

Blue Bell, PA 19422  
610-270-0300

### ***NOW OFFERING FITNESS!!***

**Chalfont**  
1500 Horizon Drive  
Suite 102E

Chalfont, PA 18914  
215-712-0300

**Pottstown-Coventry**  
10 Glocker Way  
Pottstown, PA 19465  
610-323-4300

**Lafayette Hill**  
466 Germantown Pike  
Suite 200  
Lafayette Hill, PA 19444  
610-832-7510

### Hours of Operation

Mon-Thurs: 8 a.m. - 8 p.m.  
Fri: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Sat: 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.

### Check out Our Web Site

[www.apex-pt.com](http://www.apex-pt.com)

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# Exercise: watch your weight, feel great, fight disease

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disease (CHD). CHD occurs when the arteries that supply blood to the heart muscle become hardened and narrowed due to buildup of fatty deposits, cholesterol, calcium and other substances. Regular exercise, however, boosts the body's level of high-density lipoproteins and decreases its level of triglycerides. This, in turn, lowers the buildup of deposits in your arteries and keeps your blood flowing smoothly.

While heart disease may be the leading cause of death in America, the statistics for Type II diabetes are devastating in their own right. The US Department of Health and Human Services lists diabetes as the seventh leading cause of death in the United States, affecting an estimated 24 million Americans in 2007.

Type II diabetes accounts for 90 to 95 percent of all diagnosed adult cases of the disease. Type II diabetes sufferers have cells that become resistant to the hormone insulin, necessary for the body's process of removing glucose from the blood and storing it in the cells as fuel. When insulin is not properly absorbed, blood glucose levels rise to an abnormal level, causing complications from kidney failure to neuropathy. Regular exercise, however, has been shown to have dramatic benefits in patients with diabetes by improving their insulin sensitivity and lowering blood glucose levels.

For employers, disability-related health problems are often at the top of their list of staff-based concerns. According to the CDC, disability-related costs for medical care and lost productivity have exceeded an estimated \$300 billion annually in the United States since 1994. The organization lists arthritis, heart trouble and back problems as the three most common causes of disability. Yet, regular physical activity can be a huge help in combating these issues.

Exercise is known to prevent episodes of back pain and delay disability among arthritics by decreasing bone loss and improving joint strength and flexibility. In fact, current recommendations for arthritis management emphasize a balance of rest and physical activity. This can be confusing as our natural response to pain is typically to reduce physical activity. To overcome this obstacle, the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) has outlined several modifications to exercise routines, including starting slow-

ly, progressing gradually, avoiding rapid or repetitive movements and individualizing intensity level.

While not among the three chief causes for disability, osteoporosis is another often reported reason for impairment among Americans – primarily, older women. Osteoporosis is characterized by a loss of calcium and tissue in the bones, which makes them susceptible to fracture. Milk advertisements often remind us that a diet rich in calcium can help promote strong bones. But regular weight-bearing exercise is also shown to reduce the risk of osteoporosis. And it doesn't stop at prevention. Recent research suggests that exercising regularly can reduce the rate of bone loss and conserve the remaining bone tissue, thereby reducing the likelihood of fracture. It also builds muscle strength and improves balance, both of which reduce the risk of fall-induced fractures.

Virtually everyone can benefit from exercise – from young to old, athletic to unfit, healthy to afflicted. However, the reasons for inactivity are plentiful and often more prominent in our minds than the benefits that come from fitness. So, it's especially important to take time in choosing the right facility when you decide to start an exercise program in order to avoid the excuses and pitfalls that can stop your exercise routine before it has even begun.

At Apex Physical Therapy & Fitness, we've designed an environment where our patients and clients do not need to feel averse to, intimidated by or afraid of their exercise routine. Our staff is made up of Physical Therapists and Exercise Physiologists. With this unique team and our state-of-the-art equipment, we are able to design an exercise program with each individual's limitations and goals in mind. Our programs are designed to train the entire body in strength, flexibility and endurance.

If you've been diagnosed with heart disease, arthritis, diabetes, osteoporosis or want to prevent the onset of these and many other diseases through exercise, we can help you. If you've been injured and have already undergone physical therapy, but aren't ready to start exercising again on your own, our facility is perfect for you. Or if you have simply never begun an exercise program on your own before, our staff can get you going in the right direction.

To sign up or learn more, contact us at 610-270-0300. It's never too late to start down the path to fitness.

## Meet Our Apex Staff Treat<sub>(ment)</sub> for your Tummy



**Sean Wells**  
Exercise Physiologist

Apex Physical Therapy & Fitness  
Blue Bell

Sean joined Apex Physical Therapy & Fitness in April of 2009.

He received his bachelor's degree in Exercise Physiology in 2006 from the University of Delaware in Newark, Delaware.

After graduating, Sean volunteered at several physical therapy clinics and worked as an Exercise Physiologist for a local hospital.

He is currently a member of the American College of Sports Medicine and hopes to attend graduate school to become a Physical Therapist.

Outside work, Sean enjoys spending time with his family and friends, as well as playing basketball and golf.



**Sweet Potato Fries**

*A healthy alternative to regular French fries, this tasty side dish is popping up on menus everywhere. Now, you can make them in your own home – without a fryer!*

### Ingredients

- 4 sweet potatoes, cut into large strips
- 1 tbsp water
- 2 tsp Italian seasoning
- 1/2 tsp lemon pepper
- 1 pinch salt and pepper to taste
- 2 tbsp olive oil

1. Preheat oven to 400° F.
2. Place cut sweet potatoes and water into a microwave-safe dish.
3. Cook for 5 minutes on full power.
4. Drain liquid and toss with Italian seasoning, lemon pepper, salt, pepper and olive oil.
5. Arrange seasoned sweet potatoes on baking sheet in a single layer.
6. Bake for 30 minutes, turning once, or until fries are crispy on the outside.

## Welcome new staff members

Apex would like to welcome our newest staff members:

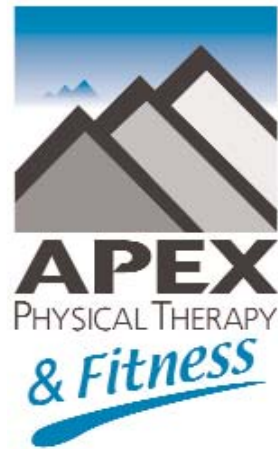
- Karin Tursack, physical therapist, Pottstown-Coventry
- Sean Wells, exercise physiologist, Blue Bell Fitness
- Chris Campbell, exercise physiologist, Blue Bell Fitness
- Susan Clark, part-time admin, Royersford
- Ashley Koch, part-time admin, Chalfont
- Stephanie Hubbard, part-time admin, Lafayette Hill

## Running for a cause

Apex Physical Therapy's Chalfont office recently sponsored the "I Can Run" 5K and 1/2-mile kid walk hosted by the Philadelphia Sports Club at Highpoint in Chalfont. The race benefited the Delaware Valley Chapter of the National Hemophilia Foundation. The office staff also handed out apple cider to all participants.

## Apex goes to Washington

Christine Osman, Managing Director at Apex's Pottstown-Coventry office, attended the American Academy of Orthopaedic Manual Physical Therapists' annual conference in Washington, DC in October. During the event, Christine had the opportunity to visit the House and Senate in order to request support from our state congressional leaders regarding important Medicare legislation. Specifically, the organization lobbied for revocation of the Medicare therapy cap, which limits Medicare patients to a coverage max of \$1860.00 per year for physical and speech therapy. They also garnered support for an extension of the "exceptions" process, which permits individuals with chronic conditions and multiple healthcare concerns to continue receiving Physical Therapy once the cap is met.



Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

*Free one-week all-access pass!!*

*Bring this pass with you to our new fitness center to try out our facility for one week, free of charge! Call 610-270-0300 for more information. Limited time offer, good for one person, expires January 31, 2010.*

# FIGHTING OFF THE FLU

## HOW MODERATE, CONSISTENT EXERCISE CAN PREVENT INFECTION

According to the American Council on Exercise, the average American adult suffers from two to three respiratory infections per year. And, in recent years, stronger strains of both the cold and flu have been hitting Americans harder than ever.

Most of us are familiar with the more common methods for preventing illness – washing your hands often; avoiding close contact with sick people and keeping your hands away from your eyes, nose and mouth. Recent studies have shown that moderate, consistent exercise can also have a positive impact on the body's immune system.

"Moderate" exercise is any type of physical activity done for about 30 minutes per day.

Heavy exercise – like marathon training – has, in fact, been shown to have an adverse effect on the body's immune response. It can decrease the number of circulating white blood cells – the body's "defense" cells. It can also increase the presence of stress-related hormones, which makes the body more susceptible to infection.

However, during moderate exercise, the opposite effect occurs. White blood cells circulate through the body more quickly and are better able to kill bacteria and viruses. As a result, the body's release of stress-related hormones slows.

These physiological changes return to normal within a few hours of activity. However, recent studies show that exercising on a consistent basis seems to make the changes more long-lasting, thereby making the individual's body more adept at fighting off illness.



# Achieving the Apex

What patients are saying about their successes at our clinics



*"My success story is that, only eight weeks after having part of my collarbone and a bone spur removed from my shoulder joint, I am back to living a normal life and working out in the gym at my own pace.... My therapy at Apex was very personal and professional. [And] the knowledge base available at Apex far exceeded any previous experiences with physical therapy I've had in the past."*

- William C.

*"After a skiing accident and subsequent surgery, I entered through the doors of Apex Physical Therapy barely hobbling on a knee with a newly repaired ACL. I left through those same doors six months later, fully able to run, hop and pivot on that knee – thanks the expertise and superior guidance of my therapists at Apex.... Under their care, I slowly and steadily regained strength, endurance and agility that I thought would never return.... Hopefully, I will be back on skis this winter. [And] as I swish down the slopes – along with being extremely careful – I will be reminded of how I would not have been there without your help!"*

- Kathy H.

*"I discovered Apex on a whim as I was desperately seeking physical therapy care after surgery on left peroneal tendon. My honest feeling was that I would never run again due to the gravity of my injury. While I owe a debt of gratitude to my surgeon, I also owe a great deal to [my therapist] and her staff as well. Not only did they work tirelessly to help me achieve my goal of running again, but they also addressed the 'human element' by raising my confidence and self-esteem. Currently, I am running five miles at a time with no pain. My sights are set on returning to my marathon career in the near future."*

- Lynne K.



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