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## Celebrate Women's Equity Day on August 26

Please join us in celebrating the 88<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Women's Equality Day on August 26.

The date was selected to commemorate the 1920 passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, granting women the right to vote. This was the culmination of a massive, peaceful civil rights movement by women that had its formal beginnings in 1848 at the world's first women's rights convention, in Seneca Falls, New York.

The observance of Women's Equality Day not only commemorates the passage of the 19th Amendment, but also calls attention to women's continuing efforts toward full equality. Workplaces, libraries, organizations, and public facilities now participate with Women's Equality Day programs, displays, video showings, or other activities.

For more information about the 2008 Women's Equality Day, please visit: <http://www.nwhp.org/resourcecenter/equalityday.php>

## Do You Know Which Fruits Ripen After They're Picked?

Apricots, bananas, cantaloupe, kiwi, nectarines, peaches, pears, plantains, and plums continue to ripen after they're picked. The tomato, which is actually a fruit, also continues to ripen after picking.

Fruits that you should pick or buy ripe and ready-to-eat include:

- Apples
- Cherries
- Grapefruit
- Grapes
- Oranges
- Pineapple
- Strawberries
- Tangerines
- Watermelon



To speed the ripening of fruits such as peaches, pears, and plums, put them in a ripening bowl or in a loosely closed **brown paper bag** at room temperature. Plastic bags don't work for ripening.



# Laughing, Humor, and Your Health

~ By Holly Joseph  
District Health Department #10



There is no disputing that it feels good to laugh! Hopefully we can all recall times in our lives that a good sustained belly laugh left us refreshed and feeling euphoric. So it should come as no surprise that there are real benefits to our health through the use of humor and laughter. Laughter increases our capacity to fight disease while boosting the immune system and relaxing the body.



## Laughter's Effects on the Body

A study done at the University of Maryland Medical Center suggests that a good sense of humor and the ability to laugh at stressful situations helps alleviate the damaging physical effects of distressing emotions. People who laugh heartily on a regular basis have lower standing blood pressure than the average person. When people have a good laugh, initially the blood pressure increases, but then it decreases to levels below normal. Breathing then becomes deeper which sends oxygen enriched blood and nutrients throughout the body.

According to the study, laughter, along with an active sense of humor, may help protect you against a heart attack. The study, which is the first to indicate that laughter may help prevent heart disease, found that people with heart disease were 40 percent less likely to laugh in a variety of situations compared to people of the same age without heart disease.

## Laughter Can Be a Great Workout

Certainly exercising our bodies is something we know we need to do for ourselves. Wouldn't it be cool if your doctor told you to laugh on a regular basis as well? Laughter works your diaphragm, abdominal, respiratory, facial, leg, and back muscles. It massages abdominal organs, tones intestinal functioning, and strengthens the muscles that hold the abdominal organs in place. Not only does laughter give your midsection a workout, it can benefit digestion and absorption functioning as well. It is estimated that hearty laughter can burn calories equivalent to several minutes on the rowing machine or the exercise bike.



## Laughter Stimulates Both Sides of the Brain to Enhance Learning

It eases muscle tension and psychological stress, which keeps the brain alert and allows people to retain more information.



## How Does Humor Improve Mental and Emotional Health?

Humor is a powerful emotional medicine that can lower stress, dissolve anger, and unite families in troubled times. Mood is elevated by striving to find humor in difficult and frustrating situations. Laughing at ourselves and the situation helps reveal that small things are not the earth-shaking events they sometimes seem to be. Humor also helps us avoid loneliness by connecting with others who are attracted to genuine happiness. And the good feeling that we get when we laugh can remain with us as an internal experience even after the laughter subsides.



## Humor Can Change the Way We Think

It is not situations that generate our stress, it is the way we view those situations. Humor can help a situation to not be so overwhelming. Attempt to laugh at situations rather than dwell on them negatively – this helps improve our disposition and the disposition of those around us. Use laughter to release pent-up feelings of anxiety, anger, and frustration. Laugh as a means of reducing tension because laughter is often followed by a state of relaxation.



## Why Do We Need a Humor To Stay Healthy Emotionally?

A healthy sense of humor is related to being able to laugh at oneself and one's life. Laughing at oneself can be a way of accepting and respecting oneself. Lack of a sense of humor is directly related to lower self esteem.



## Remember...LAUGH OUT LOUD!

There are times that we all feel frustrated, overwhelmed, or maybe even guilty about how we are doing with choosing healthy foods and getting that body moving. All of us know how very important this is for our health. How wonderful it is to know that laughter is such an important part of the equation. It doesn't cost anything to laugh, you always have it with you, and it connects us as human beings. So take care, eat healthy, exercise, love your self, and laugh, honey, laugh.

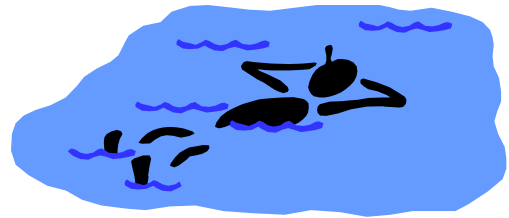
## Staying Cool with Water Workouts

When temperatures reach record highs and humidity levels soar, traditional outdoor workouts become less appealing. So how can you stay cool while still enjoying physical activity? One word – water. Water exercises are the perfect way to workout under the sun without overheating. You can get a total body workout without even breaking a sweat!

And don't worry if you aren't a veteran swimmer. Aquatic workouts aren't limited to just swimming. There are many other forms of pool exercises. You don't even have to be a regular exerciser to try aquatic fitness. One of the great things about working out in the water is that even fitness novices can easily perform many of the moves.

It's also an excellent fitness choice for all ages, from the very young to seniors. Water exercise is a very good way to burn calories, improve your strength and flexibility, tone-up, improve your cardiovascular system, and just get more fit overall. And, the types of workouts are practically endless. Most land exercises can be modified and re-created in water. Other benefits include:

- Lower injury risk
- Less sweating
- Works your entire body
- Challenges your body in a very different way than it is accustomed to
- Refreshing way to work out
- Water provides natural resistance so no equipment is needed
- Can increase/decrease intensity (difficulty) simply by alternating between shallow and deep areas
- Reduces joint compression and downward gravity pull (in other words – easier on your joints)
- Even people who can't exercise on land can often exercise in the water
- Excellent rehabilitation exercise for people recovering from an injury
- Less stress on bones and muscles
- Great option for people with arthritis



Plus, water workouts provide a fun and more socially interactive exercise option. For example, parents can enjoy time at the pool with their children while also fitting in some of their weekly workout sessions. Aquatic aerobic classes also provide a social, group-setting alternative.

Still not convinced that an aquatic workout will challenge your body as well as some of the more common workouts like walking or jogging? Try some of the sample exercises below and you'll probably quickly change your mind.

- **Swim/Walk Interval Laps.** Swim 1-2 laps. Walk 1-2 laps in the pool. Repeat sequence 4-6 times.
- **Water Squats.** Stand in the water with feet about hip-width apart. Bend your knees slightly as you push your hips back as if you are sitting on a chair. Keep your knees behind your toes. Return to start position and repeat. The water provides extra resistance and makes this move more challenging.
- **Water Jogging.** Can be done with the use of floatation devices where your feet don't touch the ground or the traditional way of actually jogging in water.

For a more comprehensive list of water workouts and more detailed instructions for the above exercises, visit:

<http://www.workoutsforyou.com/water.htm>

# Exercising Safely in the Heat

Summer is officially here. Finally you can pack away your jackets and get outside. Summer offers extra hours of daylight and with it the opportunity to spend even more time enjoying outdoor activities. For many, this means more time doing physical activities and playing sports. So it's important to remember the potential dangers that also come with exercising in hot conditions. As long as you know the do's and don'ts of working out in the heat, then you can fully take advantage of all the fun of summer.

## Exercising in the Heat Do's

- Drink plenty of fluids. It's extremely important to stay hydrated. If you're thirsty then you are already dehydrated – drink before you feel a need to. Be sure to drink throughout the day (stick to non-caffeinated beverages, preferably water). Also, drink 15-20 minutes before your workout and every 15 minutes throughout the exercise.
- Eat regularly. The heat can decrease your appetite, but it's important to eat normally. Try to eat small meals 5-6 times per day. Include lots of fruits and vegetables. Aside from being nutritious, fruits also tend to help with hydration.
- Wear light, loose fitting clothes that can breathe. Cotton is always a good choice. If your outdoor activity produces a lot of perspiration, consider clothing that is designed to wick the sweat away.
- Wear sunscreen. Even if you exercise early in the morning or late in the evening, if the sun can reach you then you can get burned. Not only is a sunburn bad on the skin and potentially dangerous, it also hinders your body's ability to stay cool.
- Use common sense and don't attempt strenuous activities that your body is not accustomed to. Stick to exercises that you are very familiar and comfortable with.
- Check the weather forecast. It's best not to participate in intense outdoor exercise sessions when the heat index registers in the dangerous zone.
- Remember to drink plenty of liquid when swimming. Just because your body is surrounded by water does not mean that you are well-hydrated. As with any land exercises, you need to regularly replenish lost fluids when in the pool.
- If you want (or need) to be working in very hot temperatures, wait until you become acclimated. Try to spend only a few minutes per day in the hot conditions for the first couple of weeks and then add time gradually each day.

## Exercising in the Heat Don'ts

- Avoid trying to diet by sweating. Excessive perspiration is not the key to permanent weight loss. Any decrease in the scale would simply be a result of water loss, not fat reduction.
- Avoid adapting the "no pain, no gain" motto. Ignoring your body's signals could be dangerous. Heat-related illnesses come with warning signs. Be sure to learn how to recognize them and what actions to take.
- Avoid physical activity during the hottest part of the day, which usually is between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.
- Avoid extreme changes in temperature. Try not to hop from being extremely hot and sweating excessively right into an ice cold, air conditioned environment. Try to cool your body down slightly before exposing it to the extreme temperature variation.

Whether you have to work outside or do it for the enjoyment, following the above tips will help you stay cool and safe during the dog days of summer.



# be food safe.

## A true "Grill Master" knows

It is important to *Be Food Safe* to ensure an enjoyable cookout for all. Always remember to:

- Wash your hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds before and after handling food.
- Marinate foods in the refrigerator, not on the counter. Sauce used to marinate raw meat, poultry or seafood should not be used on cooked foods unless it is boiled before applying.



- If using charcoal, heat coals on your grill for 20-30 minutes, or until the coals are lightly coated with ash before putting on food.
- If you partially cook food in the microwave or oven to reduce grilling time, do so immediately before food goes on the hot grill.
- When it's time to grill meat or poultry, cook it to a safe internal temperature as measured by a food thermometer. You can't tell food is cooked safely by how it looks!
- Always use a clean plate and clean utensils. Cooked food should not be placed on the same plate that previously held raw foods including meat, poultry, seafood or eggs.
- Never let raw meat, poultry, eggs, cooked food or cut fresh fruits or vegetables sit at room temperature more than two hours before putting them in the refrigerator or freezer (one hour when the temperature is above 90 °F).

Safe Minimum Internal Temps	
160 °F	ground beef
165 °F	poultry, including ground poultry
145 °F	beef, veal, lamb, steaks and roasts



## Need Some Ideas to Get You Grilling?

**Grilled Entrees:** Try using a lemon spritz on your chicken before you grill it and serve with a mushroom sauté.

**Grilled Side Dishes:** Tomatoes are a great source of vitamins and lycopene. Try grilling your tomatoes with a little olive oil for a heart-healthy and delicious side dish.

**Grilled Desserts:** Grill pineapple slices for dessert. Buy a can of sliced pineapple and place the slices on the grill and cook them until they are heated through, just a couple of minutes. Serve the pineapple rings with a little bit of frozen yogurt and a sprinkling of nuts for a healthy desert.