

HEALTHLINES

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Chad's Corner

As 1998 comes to a close, I want to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for your continued support. I would also especially like to thank you for "talking us up" to all of your friends and relatives. Word-of-mouth referrals have always been our best source of new business development. I set a rather lofty goal for Body Symmetry at the beginning of 1998 and that was to grow our business by 50%. We will probably fall short by about 10%, but I am still pleased with our growth rate for the year.

With the new-year just around the corner, I have begun my year-end assessment of my personal health and fitness status. Am I doing everything within my power to lead a healthy and fit lifestyle? For me, this includes analyzing all components of my health and fitness; cardiovascular, flexibility, strength, muscular endurance, weight management, balance, sleep and stress management. Personally, I need to work on getting more sleep (7 hrs. minimum) and improve on consistently getting in 3 days per week of cardiovascular exercise . I feel that I have all of the other bases covered. Maybe a year-end assessment is in order for you too! Make sure you convey your thoughts to your trainer while you are at it so that we can help you be successful in the coming year.

Recently, we purchased an Arcon Portable Functional Assessment Device. This device will allow us to perform functional capacity evaluations (F.C.E.'s) on worker's compensation claimants and other functional tests for industry. Our goal is to enhance our ability to attract more business from worker's compensation insurance companies, physicians, chiropractors and industry. Joella Evans, M.S. attended a training course in Austin, Texas and is our designated Arcon certified functional capacity evaluator.

Please make sure to check out our new and improved Web site. We completely revised and updated it. Our newsletter will be posted on the site for the entire world to view too. For those of you who would like us to start e-mailing you our newsletter bi-monthly instead of mailing it out, let us know. There will also be a newsletter archive. So feel free to tell your friends and family members about it. They can view and download anything they like on our web site.

All of us at Body Symmetry hope that this holiday season brings each and every one of you joy and happiness!

Yours in Health, Chad Marschik

"One of the biggest reasons
people cannot mobilize themselves

is that they try to
accomplish the great things.
Most worthwhile achievements are
the result of many
little things done in
a single direction."
-Nido Quebin

Improving with Age by *Chad Marschik, C.S.C.S*

A few days ago I received my annual Christmas card from my Aunt Barb and Uncle Joe. I have always especially enjoyed their card because my Aunt Barb writes one of those mass-mailing "cover letters". So every year I get an update on my Aunt and Uncle, as well as my umpteen million cousins scattered throughout Illinois. Usually it's full of pleasantries and such, unfortunately this year though it contained some horrible news. My Uncle Joe's father (Mr. Holbrook) experienced a terrible fall while showering. His most severe injuries were a fractured hip and a dreadful head injury. He almost died. Apparently his hip fracture required several lengthy surgeries as well as a long hospital stay. Miraculously though he made it through the surgeries and is now doing surprisingly well. You see Mr. Holbrook is 101 and up until nearly 1 year ago lived with my Aunt Barb and Uncle Joe (he lived on his own in Chicago until his mid-nineties). Last Christmas my Aunt Barb and Uncle Joe celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. I saw and spoke to Mr. Holbrook at their anniversary celebration (this was prior to his injuries). At that time he was quite capable of walking totally unassisted and was still amazingly sharp for a 100 year old man. Just two years ago he was teasing both of my kids over the Christmas holiday. I remember looking at him and chuckling to myself. I just couldn't get over how easy it was for him to walk around and communicate. Other than being a little hard of hearing, he was perfectly healthy and fit. Amazing I thought! Unfortunately, Mr. Holbrook is now in a nursing home. After his surgeries and rehabilitation he could no longer climb the flight of stairs at my Aunt and Uncle's house to get to his bedroom. Worse yet, he is now confused at times, but according to my Aunt Barb is managing the best he can.

In this country alone there are millions and millions of fractures, with a very high percentage occurring to individuals over 65. Many of these elderly individuals suffer from Osteoporosis. Osteoporosis is defined as a reduction in the quantity of normally mineralized bone. This reduction compromises the integrity of the bone micro structure, enhances fragility and increases the risk of fracture. The news is even worse if you are a female. Once you go through menopause, this age-related bone loss is accelerated due to the loss of the hormone estrogen. Luckily though, through physician supervised hormone therapy and weight bearing exercise (strength training), females are able to considerably slow down or even halt the breakdown process.

Many falls and injuries to people, especially the elderly, could probably be prevented with greater emphasis on strength and balance training. Aerobic exercise is beneficial to one's health by improving cardiovascular variables and associated risk factors, but it does little to improve functional fitness, balance and prevent sarcopenia (loss of muscle mass) from occurring. I don't know how many people that I have talked to over the years who have told me a story about a loved one who suffered a fall and fracture whose quality of life was severely altered or worse yet, eventually died.

In the December '98 journal of *The Physician and Sportsmedicine* there is an excellent article on the American College of Sports Medicine's (ACSM) very first position statement on aging and exercise, stressing the importance of strength training for older people. The most interesting point that I noted was the ACSM's reversal of their longtime stand on beginning an exercise program as an older adult. The report says that frail, elderly people who are starting to exercise should begin with strength training before they embark on an aerobic program. Moderate-intensity aerobic exercise should begin after sedentary individuals have improved their muscle strength, joint stability, and balance. Starting with a strength training program first may improve the ability to adapt to and perform aerobic activities. The report goes on to endorse balance and flexibility training as well as aerobic and strength training. Yes, balance training too. This includes postural exercises. We have incorporated balance and postural exercises for years into the training programs that we design for our clients. Most of you hopefully enjoy using the Swiss balls, foam rollers, stability boards, beams, etc.... I believe that balance and postural exercise training will continue to grow in popularity as more and more research is done in this area.

The main emphasis of the ACSM's report is how important increasing one's strength can be to improving spontaneous activity levels. Simply stated, your quality of life improves. Now, not everyone is going to live to be over 100, like my Uncle Joe's father. Hopefully though, by continuing to lead a healthy and fit lifestyle, you will be able to live long and prosper (I stole the last few words from Mr. Spock on the old Star Trek series). As I always say, exercise is medicine and if you could bottle it in a pill form, you wouldn't be able to find it on the pharmacy shelves.