

HEALTHLINES

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SUMMER 2007



Chad's Corner

I love summer! Too bad it's fast coming to a close. A lot of my summer has been spent watching my son Riley play summer baseball. Baseball is such a great sport to both watch and play! I was constantly impressed and entertained by many of the 11 and 12 year-old boys. What really struck me, time and again, was the wide skill level displayed by all of the young athletes. Some could hit well, some couldn't hit a slow moving beach ball with a club if they wanted and yet others could throw a strike from dead center field to the catcher behind home plate to nail a runner. A few kids could hit, run and throw. Best of all, everyone tried their best, regardless of how good they were!

Human movement has long fascinated me and watching so much baseball over the summer made me think of some of the people I work with at Body Symmetry. The bottom line is we all have different strengths and weaknesses. Some of us can "hit", some of us can "run" and some of us can just "throw". We all have different skill sets. Just remember to do your best! Whether you are trying to do a single leg squat with one of us or trying to convince yourself to not drink another Diet Pepsi! None of you take your health or fitness for granted; otherwise you wouldn't be spending your time or money with us. Keep trying, keep working and continuing to do your best!

Speaking of Diet Pepsi, Andy Kuhn, one of our new summer co-workers, wrote an eye-opening article on Diet Soda for this edition of *Healthlines*! If you currently drink diet soda, those days may be over after reading Andy's piece!

If you haven't seen or worked out in our new studio addition, please take a peak next door. We have added about an additional 1000 sq. ft. of space. Over the coming months we plan to add the finishing touches; equipment, etc.... The additional space will be used for general training and also for a work conditioning program for injured workers we are developing. If you or any of your colleagues have any interest in our plans with this endeavor, please contact me.

Finally, we are nearly finished with the site re-design of *freefitnessvideos.com*! This has been our summer project and I am exceptionally excited with the future of this site. We have diligently prepared nearly 200 mini-videos (averaging 2 minutes in length) pertaining to a variety of health/fitness topics ranging from nutrition to many of the exercises we do with you. We plan to add to this site as frequently as we can and hope to create a massive fitness video database of exercise/nutrition video clips that can be immediately watched or downloaded for free to your computer or ipod. The site will also eventually have an exercise prescription area where physicians, therapists, trainers, etc.... can easily create a customized wellness program for their respective patient/client.



Yours in Health,
Chad Marschik

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Exercise Spotlight
Thoracic Opener

Many times we focus on the lumbar spine (lower back) and or the cervical spine (neck) in our efforts to improve posture. While these are important, the thoracic spine (mid-back and rib cage) is just as, if not more important to train, not only for proper posture, but also for

reduction in tight muscles and prevention of joint and muscle imbalances. This segment of the spine often gets forgotten, “stuck in the middle”, so to speak.. In order to ensure that the torso, core muscles and shoulders maintain proper alignment during all movements, the vertebrae, joints and muscles should be trained to move into their full range of motion. These simple exercises can loosen up tightness in these areas, opening up the thoracic region, enabling better body mechanics, improved circulation and increase lung capacity.

Stand with your back to a wall or door, about 1-2 foot lengths away from the wall*. Stand on both feet equally with your knees slightly bent and your shoulders facing forward. Your goal in this exercise is to reach your arm back to touch the wall. Extend one arm out in front of you at chest level and slowly move it out to your side as far as you can. You should feel a stretch in the front of your shoulder and chest. After you cannot reach back any further, turn you torso slightly toward the wall, enabling you to reach back even further. All of this time, you are trying to maintain a stable hip and leg position so that you feel stretching in your torso and shoulders, rather than turning your body from the legs and hips. Once you have reached the wall, slowly return to the starting position and repeat.

Variation: Complete this exercise standing on one foot while reaching back with the opposite arm.

* Distance will vary with arm length and shoulder /chest flexibility.

Diet soda is a strange beast. While it claims to have a good taste and be healthy, neither are true. Contrary to popular belief, diet soda is not a healthy alternative to regular soda. The slight sacrifice of the familiar taste of regular soda does not lead to a more desirable health situation, however counter-intuitive. Research screams otherwise.

Let me get to the heart of the matter. The Framingham Heart Study concluded that 48% of those who are regular diet soda consumers are at an elevated risk for weight gain and elevated blood sugar. As it turns out, no published study has shown that diet soda causes weight loss. There is some suggestion that diet soda actually increases appetite, indirectly leading to consumption of more calories in other foods – and weight gain.

Even more telling is a study conducted by the University of Texas Health Science Center. This case study found that drinking diet soda was even less healthy than drinking regular soda. The risk of becoming overweight or obese for somebody who drinks regular soda 1-2 times per day was 32.8%. The risk for diet-soda drinkers who drink with the same frequency was 54.5%. The Boston Globe also released an article promoting a study linking diet soda to heart disease.

Marion Nestle, author of *Food Politics: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition and Health*, said, "Soft drinks have replaced milk in the diets of many American children as well as adults. School purchases reflect such trends. From 1985 to 1997, school districts decreased the amounts of milk they bought by nearly 30% and increased their purchases of carbonated sodas." Society, it seems, is encouraging the consumption of soft drinks. Diet soda is not a healthy compromise but merely a disingenuous business ploy.

We must, of course, heed the 19th Century British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli's advice that *there are three types of lies: lies, damn lies, and statistics*. Perhaps the reason that more diet-soda drinkers are obese is because obese people choose diet soda, rather than diet soda making them obese. These numbers, however, seem conclusive that diet soda is no *better* than regular soda at achieving weight loss.

It seems, then, that diet soda is nothing more than a way for soda companies to target people trying to lose weight. While it is not illegal to do this, it is – if the research can be trusted – misleading. The problem is not that the soda companies are actively misleading the public but that the public misleads itself.

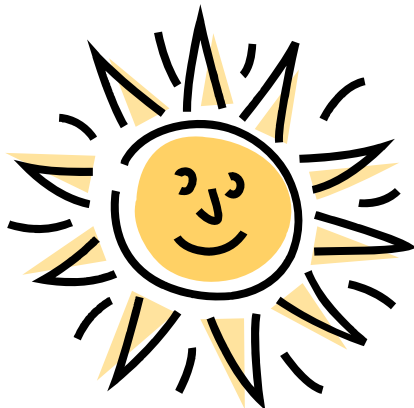
Diet soda is counterproductive to dieting, whatever its name might imply, and increases the risk for diabetes. But it should come as little surprise that companies don't want to inform the public of their product's true health implications: Americans spend over \$21 billion on it every year.

The health of Americans, as ranked by the World Health Organization, is 72nd. In the United States, the government cannot step in and shut down the diet soda industry. Therefore, it is up to the consumer to keep alert for what is best for himself.



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RECIPE HIGHLIGHT

GRILLED PORTABELLO MUSHROOMS

3 tablespoons olive oil, plus extra for greasing grill pan
4 large portobello mushrooms (about 5 inches in diameter), stemmed
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling
2 cloves garlic, minced
3 small to medium sized vine ripened tomatoes, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
8 ounces fresh water-packed mozzarella, drained, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
1/4 cup chopped fresh basil leaves

Prepare the barbecue (medium-high heat).

Drizzle 3 tablespoons of olive oil over both sides of the mushrooms. Sprinkle the mushrooms with salt and pepper. Drizzle olive oil on grill pan to prevent mushrooms from sticking. Grill until the mushrooms are heated through and tender, about 5 minutes per side.

Meanwhile, whisk the extra-virgin olive oil and garlic in a medium bowl to blend. Add the tomatoes, cheese, and basil and toss to coat. Season the tomato salad, to taste, with salt and pepper.

Place 1 hot grilled mushroom gill side up on each of 4 plates. Sprinkle with more salt and pepper. Spoon the tomato salad atop the mushrooms, drizzle with extra-virgin olive oil to finish, about 1 tablespoon and serve.

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