



Insider News

Keeping You On Top of Health & Safety

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Improve Your Balance This Winter

Written by: I.F.—Staff Writers

Each year many people sustain injuries related to falling or slipping. Wintertime is a particularly dangerous time of the year for these types of injuries, especially in individuals over the age of 65. In fact, about one in three seniors fall during the winter season due to icy and snow obstructed walkways.



Falls and slips can lead to serious injuries that can become debilitating however did you know that the risk of these injuries can be prevented by improving your balance? Following simple balance-supporting exercises will help you to do just that, but remember that you should always consult your physician before starting a new exercise regimen.

To begin, stand straight behind a chair or table with feet positioned somewhat apart. Hold onto the chair or table for balance. Now, slowly lift one leg to the side about six inches. Make sure that you keep your back and your legs straight. Hold the position and then slowly lower your leg. Repeat the process with the other leg. Alternate legs so that you repeat the process about ten times for each leg.

There are also exercises that you can perform anytime and anywhere in order to improve your balance and reduce your risk of falling or slipping. These exercises can be performed as often as you like. If you are unsteady on your feet when you first start out, you may wish to make sure that you have something nearby that you can hold onto..

- Walk heel to toe. Position your heel so that it is right in front of the toes of the other foot with each step you take. Your heel and your toes should either touch or almost touch.

- Practice standing up and sitting down, without the use of your hands.
- Stand on one foot. This is a simple exercise you can perform anywhere, such as standing in line at the supermarket. Make sure you alternate feet.

Make sure that you improving and making progress with these balance exercise. You can test yourself to see if your balance is improving by timing yourself as you stand on one foot without any support (remember to stand near something just in case you lose your balance). Now, repeat the test while standing on the other foot. Perform the test every month and record your scores. You will know that your balance is improving and your risk for falling or slipping is reduced when you are able to stand on one foot for longer periods of time.

Hit the Slopes - Safely!

Written by: I.F.—Staff Writers

There are few things that can compare to taking a winter vacation to go skiing or snowboarding. If you happen to live near an area where you can easily enjoy these winter sports, you are even more fortunate. As enjoyable as they can be, it is important to know how to safely participate in these sports to avoid illness or injury.

- **Warm-Up.** Warm-ups are essential to any type of exercise and snowboarding or skiing are certainly no different. Anytime that you engage in physical

activity without giving the muscles ample opportunity to warm up, you risk the possibility of an injury. Before heading up the slope, make sure you do some preliminary stretches so that you will not be skiing or snowboarding on 'cold' muscles. Even a few stretches or jogging in place can prove to be helpful.

- **Stay Hydrated.** In addition, it is important to make sure that you stay hydrated. Many

people make the mistake of thinking that they only need to worry about staying hydrated when they are working out or



A Sunburn in Winter?!?

When you ski or snowboard this season, keep in mind that the high altitude and reflective surface on snow makes your skin more susceptible to the sun's UV rays. In fact, because of these conditions—your sunburn may be worse than one experienced during the summer season.

Before you hit the slopes, apply a sunscreen with a high SPF. Apply the sunscreen to any areas exposed, including your face, neck and ears.

Neck warmers and face masks are also great solutions to protect your skin from the dangers of UV rays.

Hit the Slopes— Safely cont'd

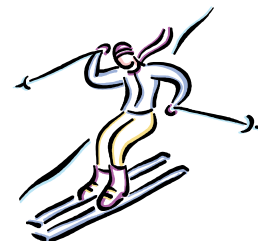
exercising in warm weather, but it is also just as important when working out in cold weather. Be sure you drink a full glass of water at least 30 minutes prior to going out to ski or snowboard. If you plan to be out on the slopes for an extended period of time, be sure that you stop frequently to re-hydrate your body. It can be very easy to become dehydrated on the slopes without even realizing it. Many safety experts now believe that dehydration could contribute to a number of winter sports accidents and injuries. The primary reason this is such a concern is the dry environment present in many

ski areas, combined with longer exercise periods and a tendency to not drink enough water by many people.

designed for experienced skiers before you are actually ready.

- **Be Cautious of Fatigue.** Fatigue can also prove to be dangerous while on the slopes. Remember that it is never a good idea to stay on the slopes past your point of endurance, especially if you are new to the sport or if it has been some time since you were on the slopes. If so, it can be a good idea to be sure you are properly conditioned before you head off for your ski vacation. Also, make sure you avoid slopes that are

Hitting the slopes can be fun. Following these guidelines will ensure that you bring home fond memories—not injuries.



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Are You Adding Pounds By Drinking?

Written by: I.F.—Staff Writers

Beers, cocktails and sodas are some of the most popular drinks around. What many people fail to realize is that liquid calories can be among the most dangerous because they are so easy to consume without realizing it.

While most people are aware of the need to watch their intake of food when trying to lose weight or maintain their ideal weight, it can be all too easy to add on pounds with drink choices. In some cases, even drinks that are thought to be healthy, such as fruit smoothies, can put you at risk for gaining weight. Fruits are high in sugar and as a result fruit based drinks can contain more calories than you might at first think. A fruit smoothie can easily contain 300 or more calories per serving. To make matters worse, that serving size is often a mere 8 ounces. Unfortunately, most people do not drink an 8 ounce serving. The typical amount consumed at once is 16 ounces, which means you could be consuming 600 or more calories at once.

Alcoholic drinks also present a grave area of concern. The average calorie content of a bottle of beer is around 150 calories. That might not seem like much if you are only consuming one beer. When most people drink a beer they do not stop at one, though. Drinks like mojitos can also be dangerous due to the fact that they are often deemed as refreshing. As a result, it can be difficult to stop at just one. An average 7 ounce mojito can contain more than 170 calories.

Sodas can also put you on dangerous ground when it comes to gaining weight. While some drinks, such as fruit juice and fruit smoothies, do at least include some nutritional content, sodas have very little if any nutritional content. They provide virtually empty calories. The sweeteners used in sodas present one of the most dangerous problems. An average 20 ounce soda usually contains sweeteners which are equivalent to eighteen teaspoons of sugar. While very few people would dump that many spoonfuls of sugar in their coffee or tea they think nothing of consuming several sodas each and every day.



Being aware of what you are drinking and limiting your intake of calorie based drinks can help you to stick with your diet plan. Remember the best drink is always water.

Employee Testimonial

"InjuryFree has helped to strengthen my lower back— I went from below average to average. I plan to continue with the program. Thank you!"

*Bridgette Blood
Grays Harbor Paper*

What is Hypothermia?

Written by: I.F.—Staff Writers

Hypothermia is a condition that affects many people. Some people do not even understand the danger in which they are in. Of course, winter is the most common time for hypothermia to set in, but it can occur at other times of year, as well.

What is Hypothermia?

Hypothermia is a condition in which the body's core temperature drops below normal. This happens when the body is unable to replace internal heat as quickly as it is affected by the environment. There are three stages of hypothermia with the third stage leading to clinical death.

What are the Symptoms?

Symptoms of hypothermia vary by stage and progression.

- **Stage 1** usually consists of shivering and numbness of the finger, hands and toes. Goose bumps form and the person's breathing becomes more rapid and shallow.
- **Stage 2** finds the person's extremities

turning blue, shivering increases in violence and the person may become confused. Difficulty walking is another common symptom of this stage.

- **Stage 3** is the final stage of hypothermia. Extremities swell and turn blue (or black), while walking is very difficult. Finally, the person may exhibit strange behavior, such as tunneling, amnesia and blackouts. Major organ failure and clinical death follow.

How Is It Treated?

Treating hypothermia is vital. Victims in stage 1 hypothermia can be warmed with body heat and sipping warm liquids. However, blankets are not a recommended treatment, nor is rubbing the affected limbs and extremities. Stage 2 and 3 victims must be taken immediately to a hospital or other medical care center. Washing, immersion and heat blanket therapy can be used to revive and treat hypothermia in a hospital.

How Do You Prevent It?

Preventing hypothermia remains the best

method of dealing with the condition. Preventing the condition is usually simple. Dressing appropriately for cold weather is the best way to prevent it. However, hypothermia due to immersion in cold water can only be prevented by being careful around water sources in cold weather. Even when the utmost care is taken, accidents can still occur.

Additionally, alcohol consumption should be avoided if exposure to cold weather is expected. Alcohol can make people feel warmer than they actually are, helping to accelerate the effects of hypothermia.

Did You Know?

- You may not know you have hypothermia—low body temperatures impair our ability to move or think clearly
- Although hypothermia typically occurs in very cold temperatures, it can also occur in temperatures at 40 degrees Fahrenheit, if the person is chilled from rain, sweat or cold water
- Those most at risk for hypothermia are elderly people, babies sleeping in cold bedrooms, people who remain outdoors for long periods of time and people who drink alcohol or use illicit drugs

Source: "Winter Weather: Hypothermia," by the CDC <http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/staysafe/hypothermia.asp>

Beginning a Weight Training Program

Written by: I.F.—Staff Writers

Weight training is a part of a fitness regime which many people are a bit afraid of. If you have never lifted weights before, this type of training can seem quite intimidating, but it does not have to be this way. Weight training is really a great addition to any fitness routine and something everyone can do. You do not have to be lifting hundreds of pounds in weights, each person has their own unique maximum and that may only be 15lbs. Weight training tends to bring out a competitive nature in some people, therefore, it is important to state that pushing yourself too far can be both dangerous as well as damaging to your body and muscles. Weight training has been created and developed to help tone and develop your strength and muscles and it is important to gradually build up your weight lifting capacity to prevent injury.

As a beginner, before begin any type of weight training, you need to learn a little bit about how it is done and how to avoid unnecessary injuries. Below are some reliable weight lifting guidelines to follow for your beginner weight training workouts:

- Start with a program what works your large muscle groups every other day (ex. Legs and glutes one day, arms and shoulders another, then abs and back)
- Warm up with 5-10 minutes of light to moderate cardio to get your heart rate up
- Choose 1-2 exercises for each muscle group and do 2-3 sets of 8-12 repetitions. If this is too much at first adjust your repetitions honestly until you are feel ready to progress
- For those who workout in a gym, if you are uncomfortable using free weights, it is a great idea to use the weight

machines in the beginning to get a feel for the motions and then move to using free weights or a combo of the two

- Always leave one day in between your workouts for your body to recover, though you can do cardio activity every day
- Each week add another repetition until you reach 12, and if you feel your body is easily handling a certain weight, add 2-5lbs to help your progression
- Remember the first few weeks are about feeling out your strength and finding your limitations. It is important to learn how to do the exercises properly in the beginning.
- After 6 or more weeks, when you feel comfortable you can increase your weight training to a more difficult level by adding additional exercises to challenge your muscles

It is important to make sure you don't leave out a single muscle group or you will find your weight training program providing uneven results. Remember the chest, back, shoulders, biceps, triceps, lower body and of course the abdominals. There are many different exercises for each muscle group which gives you a great amount of variety to mix up your routine when the time comes.

There are generally three different reasons why people use weight training, to tone your muscles, lose weight, gain muscle and to increase strength endurance. Depending on your goals, you need to adjust your weight training program adequately.



January: National Eye Care Month

Written by: I.F.—Staff Writers

Eye injuries have become quite common in the workplace, particularly in industrial environments. According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, approximately 2,000 eye related injuries are sustained by workers each year. Safety experts believe that as many as 90% of these injuries could be prevented by taking the proper precautions.

Many of the eye related injuries at work are caused by foreign objects or chemicals in the eye that can scrape or cut the cornea. Other common injuries involve splashes into the eyes and exposure to infrared or ultraviolet radiation. Workers who are most at risk for eye injuries include health care workers, janitorial staff and laboratory staff along with those who work in industrial environments. Two of the most common reasons for eye injuries include not wearing any eye protection or wearing the wrong type of protection for the task.

The type of eye protection that should be used depends upon the hazards in your workplace. If you work in an area where there are flying objects or dust you should wear safety glasses that have side shields. If you work with chemicals, goggles

should be worn. When working near radiation, including fiber optics, you should wear a face shield or helmet that is specifically designed for that purpose. It is also a good idea to routinely perform an eye hazard analysis or assessment of the workplace. Along with wearing the proper eye protection gear, make sure you are aware of the safety dangers that are present in your work area and take steps to reduce or eliminate as many hazards as possible by using work screens. Finally, make sure that your eye-wear is routine checked to be certain it is in good condition. When it becomes damaged, replace it.



January is National Eye Care Month, a time that has been specifically dedicated to promote healthy vision across the nation. Eye care professionals recommend getting your eyes checked once per year, even if you think that your vision is perfect. Getting a routine eye exam is a critical part of an overall health care plan and can help you to avoid possible vision loss.

Super Bowl Ergonomics

Written by: I.F.—Staff Writers

Watching TV is a fun way for many people to relax and unwind, not to mention catch up on their favorite sport. If you happen to be a football fan, you are likely all too familiar with the aches and pains that can often accompany lounging and watching an all day event like the Superbowl. In order to avoid such problems and increase your comfort while watching the biggest game of the year, it may be a good idea to understand and implement a few key ergonomics tips.

Ergonomics is frequently associated with workplace safety and preventing occupational injuries, but studies are increasingly showing that ergonomics can be effectively applied to many other common motions related to daily life as well. All motions have an impact on the spine and it is just that impact that ergonomics seeks to correct in order to increase comfort and reduce the chance for injury.

If you plan to watch TV for an extended period of time, make sure you choose a chair that will provide firm enough seating for you to sit comfortably. Avoid slouching while watching TV. Be sure that your feet are either resting flat on the floor or on a low footstool. Your knees should be positioned so that they are slightly higher than the hips. Your back should be resting firmly against the back of the chair.

Keep in mind that while that recliner might seem to be comfortable enough, it is not built to bend at the same places as your body, so if you are going to be spending an extended period of time watching TV, it is best to opt for a different type of chair, such as a glider rocker.

Make sure that you do not cross your legs at the knees. If you have any existing back conditions, this will only aggravate them, not to mention impact circulation to the lower limbs.

Avoid using an arm of the sofa as a pillow while watching TV. Ideally, your eyes should be positioned so that they are direct with the TV. If not, you could experience strain placed on the neck.

It may only come one time per year, but spending extended hours watching the Superbowl can place more strain than you might imagine on various parts of the body if you do not take care by practicing proper ergonomics. Doing so can help to ensure that even after the game is over and whether or not your team has won, you will not suffer from any undue strains.



Are you a Baby Boomer over 40? Consider the following:

Do you extend your arm outwards to read the newspaper or a book?

Presbyopia is a condition common in aging adults occurring when the lens inside your eye thickens and loses its flexibility. Treatment includes progressive addition lenses or surgery.

Women who have gone through menopause are likely to experience dry eye syndrome. Treatment can include medication, eye drops or surgery.

More than 3 million American have glaucoma. Glaucoma happens when an optic nerve becomes damaged from a buildup of eye pressure over time. Left untreated, you can risk severe eye damage or even blindness.

More than 20 million people ages 40 and older have cataracts. Although surgery is the only treatment option for cataracts, it restores vision in more than 95% of treated cases.

For more information about these facts or for symptom identification, visit Prevent Blindness America at <http://www.preventblindness.org>

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