



# CURTIS NEWS

Curtis  
Personalized  
Health  
Management

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2007

## Happy New Year!

The promise of a new year always motivates us to redress our health and fitness plans. This is the year we stick to our New Year's Resolutions! But then we miss a workout or two, excuses mount, and all of a sudden we feel like we are back to square one.

This is a major stumbling block for many people: adherence. **Adherence** is the ability to stick to something until goals have been achieved. Here are six tools to help you stick to it!

**1. Vision, missions and goals.** Think of a vision of yourself having achieved your objective. Make it inspiring enough to draw you on in your journey. In your mind's eye place a few appropriate 'missions' along the way, the completion of which will help you achieve your objective e.g. to complete a 3 mile fun run this summer or go on an activity holiday. And of course write down a series of easily achievable goals.

**2. Find your driving force.** When you set a goal e.g. to lose 10lb, you will have an underlying rationale behind this choice. It's not just 'to lose weight and look good', there is more. Find out from deep within yourself why you need to look good, feel good or be fitter/healthier. Identify this and your motivation will improve 10 fold.

**3. Improve your perception of exercise.** Write down all the positive and negative things you associate with exercise. If the negatives outweigh the positives then your perception of exercise is working against your best interests. It is difficult to keep doing something you don't like. Find a cognitive behaviour book for an effective way to alter your perception for the better.

**4. Life alignment.** Take a look at the other aspects of your life (family, work) that will exist along side your quest for health and fitness. Will there be any conflicts along the way? Identify where your exercise programme might cause problems with other elements of your life and resolve the issues in advance.

**5. Visual feedback.** Research has shown that the most effective exercise programmes are those which include visual feedback. Graph the miles you run or how fast you are covering set distances (as you do your weight) as you progress to aid your motivation.

**6. Relapse strategies.** You will encounter some situations later on that may lead to a relapse. It is a part of the process of change. There are ways to identify what might cause a relapse for you and how you can prepare yourself so that you have a good chance to fight it when it happens. Think about what could cause you to give up exercise and avoid these situations.

You are at a point in a process of change that can lead to a new you. Simply deciding to exercise and eat correctly, however, will not be enough. You need to make sure you can stick to the course of action you have chosen. So:

1. Find out why you really want to change.
2. Align your exercise programme with the other important aspects of your life.
3. and 4. Plan and monitor your progress.
5. Find out how to like exercise
6. Prepare for relapse, for it will rear its ugly head.

### INSIDE:

- 2 Exercise & Menopause
- 3 Update Your Workout!
- 4 Curtis Corner
- 4 Ask Jen! Your health and wellness questions answered

# Exercise & Menopause

---

Exercise is extremely important throughout a woman's lifetime and particularly as she gets older. Regular exercise benefits the heart and bones, helps regulate weight, and contributes to a sense of overall well-being and improvement in mood.

If you are physically inactive you are far more prone to coronary heart disease, obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, and osteoporosis.

Sedentary women may also suffer more from chronic back pain, stiffness, insomnia, and irregularity. They often have poor circulation, weak muscles, shortness of breath, and loss of bone mass.

Depression can also be a problem.

Women who regularly walk, jog, swim, bike, dance, or perform some other aerobic activity can more easily circumvent these problems and also achieve higher HDL cholesterol levels.

## *Benefits of Exercise*

- **Reduced stress.** Menopause can often lead to depression, anxiety and stress. Exercise is proven to help reduce stress and improve your mood.
- **Weight loss.** Exercise can help create a calorie deficit, which is what you want when it comes to losing body fat.
- **Reduction of hot flashes.** Some research has found that exercise increases estrogen levels, which can decrease the severity of hot flashes.
- **Increased bone mass.** Strength training and impact activities (like walking or running) can help strength the bones and prevent osteoporosis.
- **Reduced risk** of high blood pressure, heart attacks and strokes.

Studies show that women performing aerobic activity or muscle-strength training reduced mortality from CVD and cancer.

Just like muscles, bones adhere to the "use it or lose it" rule; they diminish in size and strength with disuse. It has been known for more than 100 years that weight-bearing exercise (walking, running) will help increase bone mass. Exercise stimulates the cells responsible for generating new bone to work overtime. In the past 20 years, studies have shown that bone tissue lost from lack of use can be rebuilt with weight-bearing activity. Studies of athletes show they have greater bone mass compared to nonathletes at the sites related to their sport. In postmenopausal women, moderate exercise preserves bone mass in the spine, helping reduce the risk of fractures.

Exercise is also thought to have a positive effect on mood. During exercise, hormones called endorphins are released in the brain. They are "feel good" hormones involved in the body's positive response to stress. The mood- heightening effect can last for several hours, according to some endocrinologists. Consult your doctor before starting a rigorous exercise program. He or she will help you decide which types of exercises are best for you. An exercise program should start slowly and build up to more strenuous activities. Women who already have osteoporosis of the spine should be careful about exercise that jolts or puts weight on the back, as it could cause a fracture.



# Update your workout! Part 1 of 2

## 4 moves to keep and 4 to lose

### Ditch: Ab Crunch

The crunch is best for beginners or people recovering from back pain. Because the range of motion in a crunch is so limited – and abs get strong fast – people can end up doing dozens of crunches without seeing any real progress.

### Do: Sit-Up

Lie on back with feet resting flat on floor, knees bent about 90 degrees, and arms crossed over chest. Tuck chin toward chest, contract abdominals, and roll all the way up, bringing chest as close to knees as possible. Roll back down. Start with 10 to 15 sit-ups.

### Ditch: Seated Leg Extension

Whether done on a machine or with ankle weights, this move will help shape your quadriceps, but leg extensions can place dangerous loads on the ligaments and tendons in your knees.

### Do: Planted Step-Up

Hold a dumbbell in each hand and stand facing a step. Step up with left leg. Straighten left leg; at the top of the move, contract glutes and extend right leg behind you. Bring right leg back down, and lower your body until tip of right toe just touches floor, keeping left foot on step. Immediately repeat, completing a full set (10 to 15 reps) with one leg. Then switch sides. (For added challenge, make the step higher or step onto a bench.)



*Make sure to place your whole foot fully on the step.*

*As you extend your leg behind, keep your core engaged as to not sway through the low back.*

*Complete the move with control as to not use momentum – it makes the exercise less effective!*

### Ditch: Side Knee Crunch

This move can put excess pressure on the fluid-filled disks in your spine while leaving your obliques largely untouched. The risks may outweigh the benefits.

### Do: Straight-Arm Crisscross

Lie on floor with knees bent and aligned over hips, and calves parallel to floor. Hold ends of a towel in each hand, arms extended so towel is stretched over knees. Roll head and shoulder blades up off floor while extending left leg to about 45 degrees from floor and moving towel to outside of right knee. Then extend right leg and bend left knee, moving towel to outside of left knee, keeping shoulders lifted. Continue alternating without dropping torso. Do 10 to 15 reps.



*Keep your neck long and shoulders down away from your ears as you rotate your spine.*

### Ditch: Dumbbell Fly

This popular chest exercise isolates just a small part of the pectoral muscle, says Hagerman. "It's not functional for anything but giving a better bear hug," he says. And less-than-perfect form can strain the shoulder joints.

### Do: Stair Push-Up

Place hands, under shoulders, on a step with arms extended. Walk feet back until body forms straight line from head to heels, or from the knees. Bend elbows and slowly lower chest to step until shoulders are in line with elbows. Press back to starting position and repeat for 8 to 10 reps. (If this is too challenging, start at a higher step or use an aerobic bench.)



# CURTIS CORNER

## Don't Set Yourself Up for Failure!

How many times have you resolved yourself to 'transform' in the New Year and come up short? Or, should I put it another way; how many times has your resolution for change succeeded? If you decide on a change, the tools on page one of this newsletter can help get you there, but, remember, it is the commitment, the resolve, the perseverance and the necessity to change that drives the modification process. So this year, listen to yourself, pick one simple habit and find out on how ready you are to revise it. Try our "readiness to change" inventory at [www.12weekstowellness.com](http://www.12weekstowellness.com) under tools and see if you are committed to doing so. If you are not ready, resolve yourself to the fact that your targeted, niggling little habit is not important enough to demand the work and effort it will take to change. In conclusion: the first habit you need to resurrect is to find out truly what is important to you, for if you stray from your true compass setting, you will always be off course.

## ~ Ask Jen ~

**Q:** I am so tired of raw and steamed carrots! What's a different way to prepare them?

**A:** Carrots add flavour and colour to a dark winter night! Here's a surefire recipe to get carrots back on your plate:

- Preheat oven to 450 F.
- Scrub and clean carrots.
- Chop off top, and slice thin carrots length-wise in half, and thick carrots into quarters length-wise
- Toss with a few tablespoons of olive oil, and arrange in a single layer on a baking sheet.
- Roast for 15 minutes, stir once, and roast 10-15 minutes longer. Remove from oven & enjoy!



Send your questions to [jennifer@curtishealth.com](mailto:jennifer@curtishealth.com)



**rackets &  
runners**

[www.racketsandrunners.ca](http://www.racketsandrunners.ca)

**Jan-Feb Newsletter 2007**

Publisher: Charles Curtis

Editor: Jennifer Beever

Curtis Personalized Health Management Ltd.

1401 Greenbriar Way

Sources:msn.ca

