



CURTIS NEWS

Curtis
Personalized
Health
Management

March / April 2007

Talking and Driving Don't Mix

Are you still guilty of using your mobile phone when you drive? Time to break this habit.



We have so many things to do that multi-tasking has become second nature. While it is often helpful, driving and talking on the phone can have serious consequences. Most people think that their attention isn't affected by talking on the phone while driving. Two researchers are proving otherwise.

A recent study has identified a "bottleneck" in the brain that makes it hard for people to multitask on challenging tasks— this is cited as a major reason to avoid talking on a cell phone while driving.

"Our new research offers neurological evidence that the brain cannot effectively do two things at once. People think if they are using a headset with their cell phone while driving, they are safe, but they're not, because they are still doing two cognitively demanding tasks at once," said René Marois, an associate professor of psychology at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn.

Marois and Paul E. Dux, a postdoctoral research associate in the psychology department, tested people to see what happened when the subjects were asked to perform two tasks at once, a news release Thursday said. The second task was often postponed, said their research abstract, published in the journal *Neuron* on Dec. 20.

"These results suggest that a neural network of frontal lobe areas acts as a central bottleneck of information processing that severely limits our ability to multitask," the abstract said.

The researchers asked the subjects to press an appropriate computer key in response to hearing one of eight possible sounds and utter an appropriate syllable in response to seeing one of eight possible images.

The results show that "the neural response to the second task was postponed until the response to the first was completed," Dux said.

Responses were delayed when the two tasks were presented nearly simultaneously, Marois said. But if the individual had a second or more between the tasks, "we did not see this delay."

Neither man uses his cell phone while driving.

"I'm Australian, and it's illegal there, so I'm trained not to," Dux said.

Even if he could, he wouldn't. A second is "a long time when you're traveling at 60 miles per hour (100 kilometres per hour)." At that speed, you would travel an extra 28 metres in one second, or a little over 90 feet.

Ask yourself if you have an extra 30 metres to come to a stop when a child darts in front of your car.

INSIDE:

- 2 Awesome Asparagus
- 2 Update Your Workout!
- 4 Curtis Corner
- 4 Ask Jen! Your health and wellness questions answered

"Laughter is the sun that drives winter from the human face" - Victor Hugo

Awesome Asparagus!

Spring brings the first of the seasonal harvest. Asparagus is worth putting on your plate – both a culinary and nutritional delight!

Here are some cooking tips to get you started. Try them all!

Stovetop:

Saucepan or Steamer: Cook fresh asparagus in a small amount of boiling water until tender. Fresh asparagus will be crisp-tender in 5 to 8 minutes.

Frying Pan:

Place a strip of folded aluminum on the bottom and up the sides of the pan, extending over the edges. Bring water to a boil; add asparagus spears and cook, uncovered, until crisp-tender, 3 to 5 minutes. Use foil strips to gently lift the spears to a serving dish.

Double Boiler or Percolator:

To steam asparagus in an upright position, fasten the stalks into a bundle using a band of foil or string. Stand the stalks upright in the double boiler or percolator with the tips extending an inch or more above the boiling, salted water. (A glass cooking vessel works best.) Cover and cook until tender, 5 to 8 minutes.

Stir-Fry:

Cut spears diagonally in 1/2 inch pieces, leaving tips whole. Stir-fry pieces in butter or hot oil, in a skillet or wok at medium high heat. Stir constantly until tender-crisp, 3 to 5 minutes.

Microwave:

Microwave fresh asparagus by placing one pound in a microwavable baking dish or serving bowl. If cooking whole spears, arrange with tips in center. Add about 1/4 cup water and cover tightly. Microwave at 100% power for 4 to 7 minutes for spears, 3 to 5 minutes for cuts and tips. Stir or turn halfway through cooking time.

Asparagus Recipes

Bacon-Wrapped Asparagus

The taste of this easy-to-prepare appetizer will surprise you.

1 pound fresh asparagus
8 to 10 strips bacon



Wash and trim asparagus spears. Cut bacon strips in half crosswise. Wrap one-half strip bacon around each asparagus spear, leaving tip and end exposed. Lay on a cookie sheet with sides. Bake in a preheated 400-degree oven for 20 to 25 minutes, or until bacon is cooked. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Makes 16 to 20 spears

Asparagus and Crab Salad

This salad makes a delicious main course for lunch or dinner.

Dressing:

2 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons rice vinegar
2 tablespoons sugar
1 tablespoon orange juice concentrate
1 tablespoon lime juice
1 tablespoon dark sesame oil

Salad:

2 cups cut-up fresh or frozen asparagus
12 ounces crab meat (fresh or canned)
1 (10-ounce) bag lettuce mix
1 cup 1/2-inch pieces cantaloupe
1 cup sliced seedless cucumber

For Dressing, combine all ingredients; mix well. Set aside.

For Salad, steam or microwave asparagus until tender-crisp. Drain and let cool. Cut crab into bite-size pieces. Combine asparagus and crab in a large bowl; add lettuce mix, cantaloupe and cucumber. Toss gently. Pour salad dressing over all. Toss to evenly coat. Serve immediately.

Makes 4 to 6 servings.

Update Your Workout! Part 2 of 2

4 moves to keep & 4 moves to ditch

Ditch: Upright Row

This is another move that was designed to build vanity muscles but ultimately may create more strain than shape. Standing straight up and pulling weights along your body is awkward and unnatural. Lifting too high can also painfully impinge the shoulder and cause wrist pain.

Do: Forward-Leaning Lateral Raise

Sit on bench with feet together, a 3- to 5-pound weight in each hand. Lean forward at waist and,



keeping elbows slightly bent, let arms hang down next to calves, palms facing each other. Squeeze shoulder blades together. Raise arms to sides in an arcing

motion until they're parallel to floor. Pause and then slowly return to starting position. Do 10 to 15 reps. This move targets the rear shoulder muscles more effectively than the upright row. It also targets the often-overlooked rhomboid muscles, which hold the shoulders back to help you easily maintain good posture.

Update your workout to keep it fresh and current.

Ditch: Heel Raise

Though this move may be useful for walkers prone to shin splints, if you're doing it for aesthetics, it's useless. The shape of your calves may be largely genetic.

Do: Walk on an Incline

Find a hill or set the treadmill on an incline and walk for 30 minutes. Your calves help propel you forward up hills. Incline walking will not only work your calves much better but will also strengthen your heart and burn many more calories than just doing heel raises would.

Ditch: Side Bend

This old-school move can actually make your waist look bigger as it unnaturally builds the obliques. The obliques aren't designed to lift in that up-and-down motion.

Do: Side Plank

Assume full push-up position, with arms extended, hands directly below shoulders, and legs extended so body forms straight line from head to heels. Tighten abs and roll body to right side, supporting torso with right arm. Extend left arm straight up, so body forms a sideways T. Hold 5 seconds, then switch sides. If balance is a problem, perform the move on your forearm instead of with your arm extended. Repeat 5 to 8 times. The result: Those abdominal muscles tighten up without bulking out. This move targets your whole upper body and prevents back pain.

Ditch: Seated Adduction

Although it does work the inner-thigh muscles, it's not the most effective way to target them. When you sit on that machine and squeeze in your legs, you're mostly targeting deep hip rotators you never see.

Do: One-Legged Press

Sit in leg press machine. Position feet hip-to-shoulder-width apart, with legs at 90-degree angles. Remove left foot from platform and place it on floor, leaving right foot where it is. Hold side handlebars and press lower back to pad. Slowly push platform away and extend right leg without locking knee, then slowly lower the weight. Complete a full set (10 to 15 reps), then switch legs. During a single-leg press, your inner thighs

work to keep the leg from moving out to the side. This move also shapes your quads, glutes, and hamstrings, so you get more total toning for your time.





CURTIS CORNER

DiETING and Exercise – Another score for Exercise

We all know that losing weight has its benefits and drawbacks. We know that the “yo-yo” diets only lead to stress, eventual fat gain, inconsistent food choices and poor lifestyle behaviors. Now, we get to the ‘bare bones’ of it all: more and more study’s show that cutting calories alone can lead to bone loss. But, when exercising, research shows no loss in bone mass! Why? Aside from potentially poor nutrition, body weight help builds bone, and weight loss reduces this load. Exercise, on the other hand, can counter diet-induced bone loss by forcing the bones to adapt to the added stress of exercise, which stimulates bone production.

So, next time your exercising for the mental benefits, the weight loss and just to look good, remember, your winning one for the bones!

For more information on weight management, contact us at info@curtishealth.com or visit www.12weekstowellness.com

Source: University of California, Berkeley Wellness Letter, March 2007.

~ Ask Jen ~

Q: *My daily walks are becoming a little tedious, but I want to avoid the impact of jogging. How can I increase the intensity of my power walks?*

A: There are a host of ways to add a kick to your morning constitutional. Firstly, have you tried a new route? Even doing a usual walk in the reverse direction can make a big difference. Try taking it to the trails: either the North Shore mountains, Burnaby Lake, or Pacific Spirit Park – hiking in nature is great! Also, try Nordic Poling – adding the arms into your walks with Nordic Poles increases the calories you burn on a walk up to 30 per cent! Plus, you strengthen your upper body as a bonus.

Send your questions to jennifer@curtishealth.com



www.racketsandrunners.ca

Mar / Apr 2007

Publisher: Charles Curtis

Editor: Jennifer Beever

Curtis Personalized Health Management Ltd.

1401 Greenbriar Way

Sources: msn.ca, asparagus.org

