

## Exercise and life quality in postmenopausal women

A US study has shown that, even without the effect of weight loss, postmenopausal women's life quality can be improved by exercise.

Researchers from the Pennington Biomedical Research Center and Louisiana State University allocated 430 female subjects, with an average age of 57, to one of four groups; the first group was instructed to expend 4 kilocalories per kilogram (2.2 pounds) of body weight per week (4-KKW) through exercise; the second group expended 8-KKW; the third expended 12-KKW; and the fourth was a non-exercising control group.

Study author Corby Martin reported; 'Adherence to exercise was 95.4 per cent, 88.1 per cent, and 93.7 per cent for the 4, 8 and 12-KKW groups, respectively, and each group spent 73.9, 138.3, and 183.6 minutes per week exercising'.

The average weight loss in each of the groups was 1.34kg in the 4-KKW group; 1.86kg in the 8-KKW group; 1.34kg in the 12-KKW group; and 0.94kg in the control group.

'A dose-response effect of exercise on quality of life was noted for all aspects of quality of life except bodily pain. In addition, the 4-KKW group had significantly improved general health perception, vitality and mental health compared with the control group. All three exercise groups had significantly improved social functioning compared with the control group' the study authors wrote.

The researchers continued; 'Our results indicate that improved quality of life can be added to the list of exercise benefits and that these improvements are dose dependent and independent of weight loss, at least among people similar to this study's sample. The exercise doses are easily obtainable and were well-tolerated by sedentary women, resulting in confidence that the exercise doses used in this study can be achieved by women in the community'.

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*Source: Archives of Internal Medicine*

## Exercise in youth benefits older bones

A recent Japanese study has indicated that adolescent girls who undertake weight-bearing exercises may improve their chances of maintaining stronger bones into old age.

The teenage exercise behaviours of 46 postmenopausal women, aged 52 or older, was recorded and looked at in relationship to bone mineral content and osteoporosis.

Study subjects who, in their youth, had taken part in weight-bearing exercise which was also low-impact, such as swimming, displayed significantly higher bone mineral content in the thigh bone and in the spine. The other study subjects reported having either played no sports at all in their youth, or having taken part in more high-impact sports such as volleyball or tennis that involved running or jumping.

The researchers from Suzuka University of Medical Science also recorded the weight-bearing subjects as having a larger outer femoral bone area, a feature which can help protect individuals from incurring fracture during bought about by pressure from movements such as bending.

An absence of participation in any weight-bearing exercises at the time of the study led the study authors to suggest that it was the subjects' exercise during their younger years which was helping them maintain bone strength more than 40 years later.

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*Source: British Journal of Sports Medicine*

## Moderate weight loss fights metabolic syndrome

A study by US doctors has found that even a reasonably small weight reduction in people who are obese could help prevent further lifestyle-related health complications, including heart disease.

Study author Christie Ballantyne, director of the Center for Cardiovascular Disease Prevention at the Methodist DeBakey Heart and Vascular Center and Baylor College of Medicine, said, 'Obesity appears to be the central component of the metabolic syndrome. Our study has shown that weight loss of as little as 6.5 per cent in individuals with the disease results in substantial reductions in blood pressure, glucose, triglycerides and total cholesterol, all factors that lead to heart disease. These impressive results occur early in the weight loss, well before individuals even begin to approach their ideal body weight'.

Approximately 50 million people in the US have metabolic syndrome, the combination of risk factors that lead to heart disease, so the study results make for positive reading. The researchers found that every risk factor was positively affected by moderate loss of weight, and that three different drugs for glucose, blood pressure and lipids would have been needed to achieve the same results with medication. Further loss of weight also showed improvements in triglycerides and blood pressure.

Source: IHRSA

## Eating with restraint advisable for older people

The idea of eating less to improve health is not an original one, particularly in the case of overweight and obese people, but recent research findings from the US indicate that eating less is particularly beneficial to those in older age.

Researchers from Brigham Young University studied the lifestyle, health and eating habits of 192 middle-aged women over a three year period. Analysis of the data compiled during the study showed that subjects who did not exercise more restraint while eating had a 138 per cent increased likelihood of putting on 3kg or more.

Lead study author and professor at Brigham Young University, Larry Tucker, said 'Some suggest that restrained eating is not a good practice. Given the environmental forces in America's food industry, not practicing restraint is essentially a guarantee of failure'.

Commenting on the study and its findings, Columbia University researcher Lance Davidson, who was not involved in the study, said 'Because the body's energy requirements progressively decline with age, energy intake must mirror that decrease or weight gain occurs. Dr Tucker's observation that women who practice eating restraint avoid the significant weight gain commonly observed in middle age is an important health message. Weight gain and obesity bring a greater risk of diabetes and a number of other chronic diseases. Eating properly is a skill that needs to be practiced'.

Source: American Journal of Health Promotion

## Parents delude themselves about young kids' lifestyle habits

A recent US study has shown that children's eating and exercise habits often elude parents, even those who may think they keep close tabs on what, and how, their offspring eat.

In a joint study which questioned 172 mothers, researchers from the University of Tennessee and Brown University Medical School reported that mothers of preschool-aged kids believed their children to eat well and get adequate amounts of exercise, while mothers of older children voiced a less positive opinion. When the nutrition and physical activity levels of the children were actually monitored by the researchers, however, little difference was noted between the two age groups.

Study author Hollie Raynor, said 'Although preschool-aged children engaged in more healthful behaviors according to parent recall, the preschool-aged children only met 2 dietary recommendations, fruit and low-fat dairy intake. All other parent-reported eating and leisure-time activity patterns did not meet current recommendations'.

Raynor continued, 'Surprisingly, other than fast-food consumption, this study found few parent-reported eating and leisure-time behaviors related to weight status, which may be a consequence of the overall poor diet quality and relative inactivity reported in this diverse sample. Thus, interventions designed to help children meet dietary and leisure-time activity recommendations should begin by assisting parents with preschool-aged children in developing skills to provide the structure and the environment necessary for their young children to develop healthful lifestyles'.

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*Source: Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*

### **Obesity research focuses on appetite control**

American researchers have reported apparently positive advances in the quest for obesity treatments.

Focusing on the area of appetite control, researchers reported success in coaxing the brains of obese mice to produce leptin, an appetite-controlling hormone. Study co-author Dr Umut Ozcan, assistant professor at Harvard Medical School, said, 'It's very exciting, because leptin was being talked about as a dead end, that it will never work'.

Ozcan noted that it had previously been thought that leptin could control eating urges in obese people, when administered in suitably high doses. However, it had become apparent that people were immune to the hormone's effects; 'Leptin comes to the brain and knocks on the door, but the brain doesn't hear it' Ozcan said.

Not to be deterred by these previous findings, Ozcan co-led a new study into leptin and found that two existing drugs, 4-phenyl butyric acid (PBA), used to treat cystic fibrosis, and tauroursodeoxycholic acid (TUDCA), used to treat liver disease, could behave as 'chemical chaperones' which assist leptin with gaining entry into the brains of mice; 'They're very safe drugs in humans and used safely for other indications' said Ozcan. The ability of the drugs to have the same effect in humans, however, remains to be seen.

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*Source: Cell Metabolism*

### **Urban adventure races hit Oz**

Australian cities will again be transformed into adventure playgrounds with the return of the Nokia City Chase, part of the world's largest urban adventure series.

This March hundreds of excitement-seekers will race to find ChasePoints scattered in hidden locations throughout the city. Each event starts with teams of two receiving a clue sheet detailing a variety of physical, intellectual and humorous challenges designed to push comfort zones.

To conquer the 4 to 6 hour urban event, teams will run, walk and use public transport to navigate their way through the city. The first team to complete the required ChasePoints and cross the finish line wins – but its not only the destination its all about the journey; people enter to experience the excitement of the event.

Past adrenaline-fuelled challenges have included eating a live worm in Centennial Park; using a Volvo car to drive a giant sized soccer ball in between goal posts at Circular Quay; running through the Hyde Park on stilts; holding deadly snakes and spiders at the Observatory; hunting for mystery clues by the Opera House; playing strip tennis by the Harbour Bridge; self-navigating through the city using GPS systems ... and much more.

It's up to each team the order in which they visit each 'ChasePoint', but a little strategic route planning, resourcefulness, determination and the ability to make decisions on the fly can help as they run, walk, hop and use public transport to navigate their way through the city.

The City Chase provides a great opportunity for both fitness fanatics and couch potatoes to try something new, add some adventure to their lives and experience some out-of-the-ordinary activity. It's also an ideal way to have heaps of fun with like-minded people and make new friends; 'You will always see laughter and high-spirits from everyone involved, interacting and having fun; from the event organisers, to the volunteers, staff at the 'ChasePoints' to the contestants and passers-by in the street' said Chelsea Spindler, event director.

The event is also a brilliant way of raising money for charity, with funds going to The Starlight Foundation, The Spastic Centre and Berry Street [www.berrystreet.org.au](http://www.berrystreet.org.au) The City Chase is open to everyone aged over 18, and you don't have to audition or train for it – just register, show up, wear a smile and be prepared for an adrenaline-filled day.

Taking place in Sydney on Saturday 7 March and in Melbourne on Saturday 14 March the chase starts at 10am and wraps up at 4pm, and is followed by an after-party.

To enter, simply team up with a buddy, partner or colleague, give yourself a quirky team name and register online at [www.citychase.com.au](http://www.citychase.com.au) (Early Bird tickets are \$150 per team, available to purchase until one month prior to the event. After this time, standard ticket price: \$175 per team).

The winning team from the Melbourne and Sydney events will receive an all-expenses paid trip to compete in the Australian Championship in Auckland. The victors will be invited to represent 'Team Australia' at the 2009 World Championships against over 30 cities at a secret international location. Australian winners also receive a Nokia handset, and a range of other gifts.

Source: Polkadot PR

## Clean Up Australia

Australians generate almost 32 million tonnes of rubbish each year – that's about 1.5 tonnes from each and every one of us and, per person, ranks us as the second highest producers of waste in the world.

We are pretty good at recycling, but half of the rubbish we produce is still heading to landfill, which we are fast running out of space for, or is being dumped in the environment.

We can all do our bit to make a difference. The next Clean Up Australia Day is on Sunday 1 March – the perfect time to get out and lend a hand to help clean up your local environment.

You can register for Clean Up Australia Day at [www.cleanup.org.au](http://www.cleanup.org.au) or by calling 1800 CUA DAY (1800 282 329).

As well as getting involved in Clean Up Australia Day, here are five easy ways to help reduce your impact on the environment all year round.

### 1. Ditch the bottled water, refill your own

Save money and the environment by avoiding bottled water. You won't just be reducing the 2.7 million tonnes of plastic used worldwide each year to make bottled water, but you can also save as much as \$1,000 simply by refilling bottles with tap water.

### 2. Think 'Reuse, Reduce and Recycle'

Avoid the long term cost of disposable items like plastic cups by investing in the real thing, and go for rechargeable batteries instead of single-use to cut down on waste.

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### 3. Rent equipment or share with friends to save energy

Before you rush out to buy that new piece of equipment, ask yourself if you really need it. Rent or borrow equipment you may only use a few times or buy them second hand. You'll save money and reduce the amount of rubbish created.

### 4. Get a free training session – run to work

Transport is Australia's third largest source of greenhouse gas emissions. Reduce your emissions footprint, and your fuel bill, by running or walking to work, the shops or to the gym.

### 5. Get involved in Clean Up Australia Day on Sunday 1 March

Register a Clean Up Australia Day site or volunteer at a site by visiting [www.cleanup.org.au](http://www.cleanup.org.au) or by phoning 1800 CUA DAY (1800 282 329).

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Source: Essential Media Communications

## Walkies! Pound the pavements for the Million Paws Walk

The Million Paws Walk is the RSPCA's major national fundraiser. Every year in May over 60,000 people and 25,000 dogs hit the pavement to raise much needed funds for the RSPCA. It's a fun day out for the whole family and helps the RSPCA extend a helping paw to animals in need.

**WHEN:** Sunday May 17, 2009

**WHERE:** There are 70 walks around Australia and one in every capital city – visit [www.millionpawswalk.com.au](http://www.millionpawswalk.com.au) for locations or contact your nearest RSPCA.

**WHY:** Last year the number of animals cared for by the RSPCA in Australia reached a 15 year high and cruelty complaints jumped by more than 15 per cent. That's 161,994 dogs, cats, horses, goats, pigs, rabbits, guinea pigs, ferrets, turtles, chickens, birds, sheep, kangaroos, possums, wombats, koalas (to name just a few!) seeking refuge in our shelters and 49,494 complaints of cruelty and neglect investigated by our inspectors. 98 per cent of the RSPCA's national funding comes from public donations and fundraisers like the Million Paws Walk. That's why your support is so important.

**HOW:** From March you can register online at [www.millionpawswalk.com.au](http://www.millionpawswalk.com.au) You can also start a fundraising page for your pooch and get your friends and family behind you! There are great prizes to be won, and it's a great social way to get outside and exercise while helping our four-legged friends!