

# FITNESS

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heart, the lungs and the kidneys and other body organs all improve with exercise.

"The heart is a muscle, it benefits from being exercised," Lacagnina said. "Other organs benefit from increased blood flow and oxygen."

That includes the mind.

"Studies show that exercise keeps the risk of Alzheimer's disease down," Lacagnina said. "Exercise also contributes to weight loss and fights diabetes."

Weight loss seems to be the number one reason people begin exercise programs, said Scott Wills, the fitness program supervisor at The Wellness Center of Cape Coral.

"A lot of people come in just to look better," Wills said. "They have the misconception that if their waist is fat all they have to do is exercise the abs and they'll get a washboard. That's not true."

Unfortunately, the body doesn't always choose the places we want it to take the fat from. The body will take fat from the most convenient place that could be where it last deposited the stuff. That could be an arm, not the waist.

No matter where it comes from, to lose fat a person must burn more calories than he or she takes in.

"I recommend an eating plan that a person can live with for the rest of their life," said Jeanne P. Struve, Registered Dietician with Southwest Florida Regional Medical Center.

"Eating breakfast is very important. So is not eating after dinner. Moderation and balance promotes a long healthy life."

Along with the American Heart Association, Struve recommends a daily multivitamin. Fruits and vegetables remain important as do whole grains. Avoid processed flour.

"Bagels are not as healthy as people think," Struve said. "Then people put cream cheese on them, that's all fat that has to be burned."

There are plenty of places to burn calories in Lee County. Health clubs, gyms and bike trails abound in Fort Myers, Bonita Springs and Cape Coral. The benefits from exercise are not lost on local residents no matter their age.

"I'm an athlete, I play basketball, but I do this for my mental health too," said Gold's Gym member Heidi Hyche, 35. "I take a break before I have to pick up the girls from school. Exercise relieves stress and I feel relaxed, not tense."

As an athlete, Hyche appreciates that walking and climbing stairs are considered load bearing exercises. It is just the type of exercise recommended by the National Osteoporosis Foundation.

Women and men are vulnerable to osteoporosis, which depletes bone tissue, Lacagnina said. It pays for both to do



FLORIDA WEEKLY PHOTO PETE SKIBA  
Gold's Gym in Fort Myers offers weight training and aerobic workouts such as racketball.

aerobic and weight training exercises for their legs and arms.

The bones have similar properties to the muscles — use them or lose them. If your bones and muscles are not put to work they lose mass as people age.

Knowing this, Hyche puts in 45 min-

### Eat well

The American Heart Association recommends:

- >> **Don't eat more calories than you expend in a day**
- >> **Do at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity every day.** If you can't do 30 minutes at once, do 10 minutes three times a day.

Base your eating pattern on these recommendations:

- >> **Choose lean meats and poultry without skin,** added saturated fat or trans fat
- >> **Use fat free,** 1 percent and low-fat dairy products
- >> **Cut back** on partially hydrogenated vegetable oils
- >> **Aim for less than** 300 milligrams of cholesterol a day
- >> **Cut back** on foods and beverages with added sugars
- >> **Choose and prepare foods** with little or no salt
- >> **Alcohol should be drunk in moderation.** One drink per day for women, two for men
- >> **Follow recommendations** when eating out and watch portion sizes
- >> **Never smoke.** Avoid other's tobacco smoke.

—Source: Americanheart.org

utes on the treadmill, more time on the stair climber and lifts weights a few times a week.

Lifting weights is also a good calorie

### Exercise

Two types of exercise are important for building and maintaining bone mass and density.

- >> **Weight bearing exercises** where the bones and muscles work against gravity. This includes any exercise where the feet and legs bear the body's weight. Jogging, walking, stair climbing, dancing and soccer are examples. Swimming and bicycling are not weight-bearing.
- >> **Resistance exercises** are ones that use muscular strength to improve muscle mass and strengthen bone. These are weight lifting on machines or with free weights such as those found at health clubs.

—Source: National Osteoporosis Foundation

burner. The lifting can be done in a circuit, moving from one lifting machine to another with a very brief rest between stations.

The circuit enhances the cardiopulmonary system as it strengthens muscles. Building muscle mass by lifting weights also helps in fat loss. The bigger the muscle the more calories it burns.

Burning calories through joining other bicyclists in a club such as the Caloosa Riders becomes a social outlet as well as a good way to exercise.

"We get together after races for dinner and plan other rides," said club member Dick Bennett, 62. "It is a good way to have fun and meet people."

A group of weight lifters from Fort Myers do the same thing at the Omni