

Educational – Health and Exercise

June 19, 2010

The Educational theme this year is “Approaching the Years with Grace in ESA”. This will involve any topic that helps us to improve ourselves and gain knowledge so that hopefully life will be easier. A couple of examples are health and exercise, social security, defense. If you have any questions, please let me know. Today I will be talking about “Health and Exercise”.

As we age, we watch certain milestones happen and things change before our eyes. We find that we cannot abuse our body as much as we did when we were younger. Our bodies are not as resilient as they used to be. This can also be time for self-reflection. Have you thought about your purpose in life and found what makes you happy and fulfilled? You may be on the path that you plan to continue on or you may be ready for something new. I am going to give a to-do list to help keep mind and body in optimal shape.

_Get lots of sleep. Maybe you got along with four hours a night when you were 40, but your body can't take that abuse when you're older.

_Set aside quiet time every morning. Meditate, pray, visualize your day. Read something that inspires you. Focus on self-renewal.

_Be optimistic. Take time to understand what you want out of life. Find purpose and meaning. Then spread the joy to others.

_Get cancer screenings. Colon screening begins at 50. Mammograms should be annual. Pap smears continue every one to three years if you are sexually active.

_Check your bones with a bone density scan. Talk to your doctor about calcium and vitamin D. Get at least 1,200 milligrams of calcium daily.

_Get an annual checkup. You need blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose and thyroid tested. Also, talk to your doctor about any symptoms of depression, which can be common for women over 50. These include: persistent sadness or pessimism, feelings of worthlessness, loss of hope, difficulty concentrating, anxiety and insomnia.

_Get plenty of aerobic exercise (like walking). It builds strong bones. It also reduces heart disease risk. Heart disease is the No. 1 killer of women.

_Take up yoga. Yoga is a great stretching exercise and enhances flexibility. Flexibility gives you better balance, so you don't fall – which avoids fractures.

_Have fun. Go bungee jumping, rock climbing, backpacking, skiing, dancing – whatever makes you happy. Act like you feel and you'll feel youthful.

_Eat colorful foods. It's important for women over 50 to get plenty of fruits and vegetables. Eat more fatty fish (like salmon) to get heart healthy omega 3 fatty acids. Learn to love whole grains, lentils and skinless lean protein. Treat yourself to sweets, but only occasionally. When you use oils, lean toward good ones, like extra virgin olive oil.

_Drink sensibly. For all women, not just women over 50, one alcoholic drink are plenty.

_Find a creative outlet. It helps prevent depression – and depression affects memory. Having a creative outlet helps stimulate your mind. Take up painting. Create a wonderful garden. Engaging your creativity stimulates your brain more than reading and certainly more than TV.

_Make your home an oasis. Eliminate clutter. Fill your home with great music, books and friends. Withdraw and recharge when you need to.

_Associate with positive-focused people. They will not drain your valuable energy with complaints. They will help you pursue the best that life has to offer.

Try to do at least one of the items on your to-do list a day to help guide you in the right direction for a healthier you, mind and body.

On your table you will find a handout. These are chair exercises and it means just that, you do them in your chair. You can do them while you are talking on the phone, watching your favorite TV show or just relaxing on your porch. This goes back to the age old saying, “you have to move it or you'll lose it”.

Joyce Gibson
2nd Vice President/Educational Chairman

Resource:

Isabelle Zehnder – For Women Over 50

Mary Ann's Quick and Easy Energizer Chair Workout

(The following exercises are done seated in a chair)

WORKOUT OBJECTIVES

- *Lubricate joints
- *Increase circulation
- *Keep ankle joints flexible
- *Strengthen tibialis muscles or shin
- *Stabilize spine
- *Strengthen postural muscles
- *Strengthen mobilization muscles

ANKLES Circle the ankle by drawing an imaginary circle with the toes, 4 times to the right, then 4 times to the left. Repeat exercise with left foot. *This exercise lubricates the ankle joint.*

SHINS Tap the toes by lifting the toes of both feet (with the heels on the floor) and dropping the toes. Repeat 8 times and pause. Then lift toes and hold for a second and release. Repeat 4 times. *This exercise strengthens the shin muscles and will help prevent tripping.*

CALVES Extend leg from knee and flex the ankle. Point the toes toward the knee and feel the calf muscle stretching. Repeat 4 times on each leg, alternating legs. *This exercise will help avoid cramping in the lower leg.*

QUADRICEPS Extend the leg forward. Tighten knee cap as though pushing on a gas peddle, then release. Repeat 4 times on each leg. Put hand on quadriceps (front of thigh) and feel the muscles contract. *This exercise stabilizes the knee joint and strengthens the muscles needed to get up and down in a chair or on and off the toilet.*

HIPS & REAR Squeeze the buttocks muscles together and release. Repeat 4 times. Then sit on one hip and tighten the abdominal muscles. Repeat 4 times, alternating right and left hip. *Strong gluteal and hip muscles are important in walking.*

BACK & HAMS Bring one knee to the chest (circle the ankle at the same time to lubricate the ankle joint). Repeat 8 times, alternating

knees. *Stretched lower back and hamstring muscles help prevent low backaches.*

SPINE & NECK Sit up tall and lengthen the spine. Hook the right arm over the back of the right side of the chair and reach across the body with the left arm for spinal rotation. With the arms in this position, look right as far back as the eyes will go. Look forward. Look left. Repeat the exercise on the left side. *This exercise helps to keep the neck and spine flexible.*

SHOULDERS Lean out over the side of your chair (don't slouch – keep rib cage lifted). Allow the right arm to dangle straight down to the floor and keep it totally relaxed, even the fingertips. Begin circling the arm from the shoulder. Just start the arm moving and let it circle on its own. Don't try to make a perfect circle. Count to 8 and then reverse the circle. Repeat the exercise with the left shoulder and arm. *This exercise warms up the rotator cuff muscles in the shoulder.*

SHOULDERS Roll your right shoulder forward-up-back-down. Do exercise with left shoulder. Repeat 4 times on each shoulder. Then roll both shoulders at the same time. Repeat 4 times. *This exercise loosens up the shoulder joints.*

BACK Pretend you are holding a tray in front of you at waist level with palms up. Elbows should be lightly touching the sides of your body. Now pull right elbow back, then left elbow, squeeze both shoulder blades together and then release. Repeat 4 times. *This exercise strengthens the postural muscles.*

NECK Put the neck in alignment by touching the chin with one hand. Then pull the chin back from the hand, (keeping the chin parallel to the floor). Do not tilt the head up or down, keep it level as though it was moving back and forth on a set of railroad tracks. Now turn your head to the right, look back with your eyes as far as you can. (Stay in comfort range) Repeat exercise to the left. *This exercise helps to prevent a stiff neck and insures proper neck alignment.*

UPPER BODY Look straight ahead and lift both arms from side of body up toward ceiling and then back down toward floor. Repeat 1 time. Reach up with one arm at a time as though you're picking apples from a tall tree. Repeat 8 times, alternating right and left. Stretch your fingers as you reach up. *This will*

help lengthen your spine, increase circulation and range of motion, and exercise the fingers, all at one time.

SPINE

Reach up with right arm, reach down with left arm and stretch 2 times in both directions as you reach with your fingertips. Repeat exercises with left arm up and right arm down. *This exercise stabilizes the spine.*

FINISH

Lift both arms from sides of body toward ceiling and then back down. Place relaxed hands, palms up, in lap. Now take a deep breath and give yourself a pat on the back! You did a great job!