

MERRITT

Wellness

Committed to the Health of our Family

May 2014

Reduce Stress by Getting Active Outside

From Lauren Slayton, Fitbit Blog: <http://blog.fitbit.com/fitbits-spring-clean-reduce-stress-by-getting-active-outside/>

Forget therapy (OK maybe not) have you heard of ecotherapy?

There is a burgeoning area of research on "ecotherapy" or the effects time spent outside has on us. A study conducted in the UK compared a group walking in a shopping mall to another group walking in the park. After walking in the park, 90% of participants claimed increased self-esteem, 88% improved mood and 71% felt less tense. For comparison, these numbers were under 50% in all criteria for the mall walkers.



Time outside provides an escape from our homes and our desks. It's a time to reflect and may evoke good memories. Outside time

also stimulates our senses with color, sounds and fresh air.

In terms of exercise, a study out of the University of Utah compared the 5K times of runners on treadmills, an indoor track and outside. The fastest times were recorded outdoors, the slowest on the treadmill. Runners on the treadmill perceived their work out to be more strenuous than those who ran at the same intensity outside.

Another study found that the more people exercised outside (moderate-to-vigorous activity), the more their total weekly workout time increased. "Participants reported greater enjoyment and satisfaction with outdoor activity and declared a greater intent to repeat the activity at a later date. And if it's not warming up yet where you live, don't let that stop you. One study found after 6 weeks of spending 2 hours outside (in 60-degree weather), participants had decreased body fat.

But it certainly doesn't need to be two hours when it comes to your mood. As little as 5-10 minutes spent outside, even stationary, can make a difference to your stress level and your outlook. Those 10 minutes a day may keep mean mommy (or mean daddy or mean coworker) away.

For more Healthy Hacks from Fitbit check out blog.fitbit.com

Track It: New apps and digital fitness products can help your workouts

By Roy S. Wallack, Baltimore Sun

A tidal wave of apps and digital fitness products — loaded with practical data and often inexpensive (or even free) — is making tech-free running a thing of the past. A survey from Freescale Semiconductor, the chip supplier behind Fitbit and other wearable devices, found that 88% of runners training for marathons used wearable technology. Here's a sample of some data-tracking apps and gear we found useful.

Pumatrac: The free iPhone running app tracks and audibly informs you of your distance traveled, speed, calories burned and weather, ultimately producing a real-time map, elevation profile of your route and an overall score for the workout (arrived at by a mysterious algorithm that combines all the variables). It also includes a social leader board that shows you how other Pumatrac users are doing." **Price:** Free. puma.com/pumatrac.

Runtastic Adventure app: This app's concept is "story running," found in four 38-minute dramatic narrated stories that have a protagonist running to or away from something: the fantasy story "Journey of Imluath: The Tribes' Saviour," the motivational story "Toward the Finish Line," the travel story "The Globberunner: Rio's Marvels of Life" and the adventure story "The Carrier of Truth: Beyond the Walls of Alcatraz." Runtastic also includes normal workout and social features. **Price:** 99 cents for each story or the four-story bundle for \$2.99. runtastic.com.

Pure Move iPhone armband: It holds your phone in place without a clear plastic screen over it. **Price:** \$49.99. pure-gear.com.

Milestone Fitness Tracker: The small, light (1-inch diameter, 10 grams) mileage and data collection device has a built-in USB connector that laces onto one of your running shoes via a silicone jacket. Actuated by movement, it displays cumulative mileage and lets you know when to replace your shoes. **Price:** \$19.95. App is free. milestonepod.com.



1 serving
Active Time: 20 minutes |
Total Time: 20 minutes

Southwestern Salad with Black Beans

from Eating Well: March/April 2014

Here we top salad greens with black beans, sweet corn and grape tomatoes and bring it all together with a tangy avocado-lime dressing for a Mexican-inspired salad. Try this salad for a take-along lunch. To keep the salad greens from getting soggy, pack the greens, salad toppings and dressing in separate containers and toss them together just before eating.

Ingredients

- 1/2 ripe avocado
- 3/4 cup packed fresh cilantro
- 1/2 cup nonfat plain yogurt
- 2 scallions, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, quartered
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3 cups mixed greens
- 1/2 cup black beans, canned (rinsed) or cooked
- 1/2 cup corn kernels, fresh or frozen (thawed)
- 1/2 cup grape tomatoes

Quick Kitchen Tip: Sandwich your tomatoes between 2 two plates. While pressing firmly on the top plate, slide a knife in between the plates to perfectly slice your tomatoes in seconds!



Preparation

1. Place avocado, cilantro, yogurt, scallions, garlic, lime juice, sugar and salt in a blender; blend until smooth.
2. Place greens in an individual salad bowl; toss with 2 tablespoons of the dressing. (Refrigerate the remaining dressing.) Top the greens with black beans, corn and tomatoes.

Nutrition

Per serving :235 Calories; 4 g Fat; 1 g Sat; 2 g Mono; 0 mg Cholesterol; 43 g Carbohydrates; 13 g Protein; 13 g Fiber; 307 mg Sodium; 1325 mg Potassium; 2 Carbohydrate Serving

Exchanges: 2 starch, 2 vegetable, 1 lean meat, 1/2 fat

Tips & Notes: Make Ahead Tip: Cover and refrigerate leftover dressing for up to 3 days.

Merritt's Employee Assistance Program

Trusted Solutions to Life's Challenges

From online information to confidential consultations with licensed behavioral health professionals, you and your eligible household members have access to a wealth of practical, solution-focused resources to help you reduce stress, strengthen relationships, increase productivity and improve the overall quality of your life.

So Much to Do, So Little Time

Life moves fast. These days it seems like everyone is asked to do more in less time and with less help. With all you have to do, it can be hard to focus on everyday matters, let alone issues that are harder to control, such as:

- Changes in your financial situation
- Family or relationship problems
- Overwork or conflicts at work
- Feeling depressed or anxious
- Quitting tobacco, alcohol or drug use
- Caring for children or aging parents
- Losing weight and living healthier

Challenges like these can make life hard. When you're busy, you might not think there's time to find solutions. So, it's important to know that your organization offers a program that can help you solve everyday—and not so everyday—problems confidentially, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There's no cost to you and your eligible household members to use this program; however, any costs or copayments beyond this program will be your responsibility.

Easy Access to Services

Your program is here to provide you and your eligible household members with the right help at the right time. You can quickly get help in a way that works best for you:

By Phone—Call to get consultation and solutions to everyday problems as well as help in a crisis. You will get access to resources or a referral to a professional in your community for confidential help.

Online—Log on to locate counselors in your area. Find targeted information and resources that address your everyday concerns as well as more serious issues. Interactive tools help you discover ways to live a healthy lifestyle.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is there a cost for using my Magellan program? No.

Your Magellan program is a prepaid service offered by your employer or organization.

How many counseling sessions do I have? Your program includes up to 5 counseling sessions.

Who can use the services offered through my Magellan program? Services are available to you and, depending on your program, to your eligible dependents or your household members.

What if my counselor and I decide I need additional help? If you need assistance beyond the scope of what your Magellan program provides, you may be referred to other resources such as your health benefits or community resources.

Your program also includes:

Magellan Healthyroads® with PHA

Imagine yourself fit, strong and full of energy! Your road to good health starts by taking an online Personal Health Assessment. While online, check out Magellan Healthyroads' interactive wellness tools that make getting healthier empowering—and fun, too!

Legal & Financial Consultation Services

Talk to an expert, quickly and confidentially. Get legal help with family and divorce law, estate planning, and civil or criminal law, among other issues. Financial experts can help with a range of topics, including planning for retirement, debt consolidation and more.

Work-Life Services

Saving you time and money. Experts provide information and pre-screened referrals for prenatal care, adoption, child care, education, retirement, senior care, special needs and more. An exclusive member discount center offers more than 3.5 million discounts.

Learn More

Visit www.magellanhealth.com/member to learn more. On the website you will need to sign in:

- Click "New or Unregistered User" link
- Enter our program number (800-327-4585), click Continue
- Enter company name and click continue
- at this point, you can either register to customize or click "Skip registration"

**Employee Assistance Program
For Professional Consultation**

Call 1-800-327-4585

In Case You Missed the Email.....2014 Program Update

Now that we're entering this year's second quarter and it seems that spring has finally sprung it's time for an update on the status of Merritt's 2014 Wellness Program.

First off, some good news about last year's results: 100% of Merritt employees who participated in the biometric screenings qualified for the preferred premium rate by meeting or improving in 1 of the 6 Key Health Indicators! Overall Merritt is a fairly healthy group with our metabolic syndrome prevalence coming in well below the national average. Good job everyone!

Personal accountability continues to be a key to the success of the Merritt Wellness Program. Merritt Wellness encourages all employees to further their personal health journeys and will continue to provide tools and resources to help everyone along their path, including activities and challenges that will be offered throughout the year.

Merritt has done well and we are sure we can do even better. This year we are going to kick it up a notch. In order to qualify for the preferred premium rate in 2015, Merritt will ask that employees do 2 things:

1. Complete a physical exam with a Primary Care Physician in 2014.
2. Participate in a biometric screening in Fall, 2014 and meet or improve in 2 of the 6 key health indicator values (99% of biometric participants met this goal in 2013)

Merritt's healthcare coverage allows all participants one annual physical every 12 months. While it's important to know your numbers it is also important to establish and maintain a relationship with your primary care physician. In order to qualify for the preferred premium in 2015, employees must visit a Primary Care Physician and submit an affidavit indicating the visit is completed.

Merritt will offer an on-site biometric screening event in the fall to allow all employees the chance to participate in the screening process. If your annual physical occurs between September 1, 2014 and November 30, 2014, employees may alternatively have their screening performed by their primary care physician as part of their annual physical and use a physician's affidavit to submit their biometric values. Values will be compared to values collected in 2013.

Employees who did not meet or improve in at least 2 of the 6 Key Health Indicators will have an opportunity to visit their personal physician to submit new values or request a waiver for values affected by an existing medical condition. A reasonable alternative program will be available as another method for earning the preferred premium rate for those values that cannot be appealed or waived.

All new employees who were hired after November 1, 2013 need only to participate in the biometric screening and attend an annual physical with their primary care physician in order to receive the preferred rate in 2015, they will not be required to meet or improve in 2 of the 6 Key Health Indicators. Anyone hired after June 1 is waived from the physical examination and need only participate in the screening to receive the preferred rate in 2015.

Along with these changes we are also pleased to announce that we have added new members to the Wellness Committee to add fresh perspective and new ideas in 2014. Please join us in welcoming Lauren Lindsay from leasing, Eric Dunn from land development, Mike Passarello from customer service, and Luke Myers from construction. We are sure they will be a great addition to our committee!

Share any ideas you may have for upcoming events, newsletter articles, contests, questions, seminars, & more by speaking with any committee member (Meg Truchon, Holly Moye, Tracy Funk, Ken Jonmaire, Pam White, Mike

Pasarello, Eric Dunn, Lauren Cannon) or by sending an email to:

MerrittWellness@merrittproperties.com

All ideas are welcomed!