

## 2008 EVENTS AT THE LHCW



Gina Ekmekjian

The Lerner Health and Wellness Center (LHCW) is offering a number of programs for the spring semester that are sure to satisfy all of your Health and Wellness needs in the New Year. Keep your eyes out for some of these NEW and exciting events!

- Extreme Training classes are free all semester! Taught by our personal trainers, these classes are designed to train you like an athlete. You will increase your speed, agility, strength, endurance, and overall performance through a series of intense circuits and plyometric drills. Sessions will progress in intensity with each class, and aid you in achieving your personal fitness goals – all at no extra cost!
- Group Fitness classes will be offered at the Mount Vernon Campus. Get excited for Pilates and other group fitness classes in the dance studio!
- We are vamping up our already amazing roster of group fitness classes with belly dancing, fitness interval training, and double step! Come visit the Campus Recreation Office or visit our website for more details.
- Clear your calendars for our Health Fair on February 13th from 5 to 6:30pm! Come for some free food and swag on the second floor of the Health and Wellness Center.
- In March, prepare for the LHCW's Mind and Body week! Yoga and Pilates classes are free March 10th – March 16th. Bring a friend and unwind during midterms together!
- Not going away for spring break? That's ok! ALL group fitness classes are free March 17th – March 23rd!
- Don't forget to check out our roster of Spring Intramural Sports. Assemble or join a team and get excited!
- As always, don't forget to keep your eyes on bulletin boards throughout the facility for information on other events during the semester. Make sure to stay active in the New Year!

### JUICE ZONE™ FRESH & HEALTHY Cafe

Do you find yourself nodding off in class after you eat lunch? Try eating Energy Food! Juice Zone offers a variety of wraps, salads, paninis, and Brown Burritos. Brown Burritos are made with brown rice which are designed to be delicious and nutritious and keep your energy levels high throughout the day!

Health and Wellness Center, 23rd & G St.  
1990 I St., NW (at 20th & I) Accepts GWorld

## ON A ROLL



Rachel Abair

Ever have muscle pain or tension? Do you wish you could get a massage but can't afford it? Ever tried foam rolling? It's like getting a deep tissue massage without the oil, and without paying the 50 plus bucks! And foam rolling is so much more than a massage...

### Who?

Most people have major muscle tension and imbalances. Physical trauma and muscle overuse causes knots, scar tissue, and adhesions (bands of scar-like tissue), which form on muscles and tendons. Rolling allows the muscle to relax, kneads out those knots, scar tissue, and adhesions, and also helps restore normal flexibility and range of motion.

### What?

A foam roller is commonly a 36" long, 6" in diameter cylinder of dense foam. (They come in other forms and sizes). Foam rolling, to be technical, is "self myofascial release" (SMR). Self (you), myo (muscle), fascia (connective tissue layer surrounding muscles), release (relax). It is a way of stretching a muscle, and stretching is essential for good overall muscle health. While static stretching elongates the muscle tissue, foam rolling helps to ensure proper muscle quality.

### How?

Place the roller between your muscle and the floor and use your body weight to SLOWLY roll the length of your muscle. When you reach a painful spot or "trigger point" (you will know when you do), stop rolling and hold on that spot until the pain releases. If the pain does not recede, continue rolling and hit all of your trigger points. Eventually, through practice and repetition, you will find relief. Remember, these painful areas are around because of years of bad habits, injuries, and other traumas, so they won't go away entirely overnight.

### Tips:

- When beginning an SMR program, start with less body weight then progress to more. When rolling your legs for example, roll both legs at the same time in the beginning. When you need to add more pressure, roll one leg at a time or progress to crossing or stacking one leg over the other.
- Start from the proximal (nearest the center of the body) to the distal (furthest from the center of the body) attachment of the muscle. For example, when rolling your quadriceps, start at your hip flexors and work down to your knees.
- Roll insides and outsides of your muscles. For example, while rolling the length of your calves, rotate to the medial (inside) and lateral (outside) of the muscle.
- Basically, you can roll almost any part of your body. Be especially careful on the low back and avoid areas that cannot support the weight you place on them.

Start off slow, get a schedule down, and keep on rolling. Eventually it will become a normal part of your exercise routine and you will find relief and start feeling better.

Note: Those with circulatory problems and chronic pain diseases (i.e. fibromyalgia) should NOT use foam rollers.

# FOCUS ON FITNESS

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY • JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2008

## BIG AND STRONG! STRONG... BUT NOT BIG?



Rachel Bovee

There are two general goals that individuals have when strength training; gain strength and/or increase muscle size (hypertrophy). Some set out to acquire both strength and size, while many would rather just acquire strength without the accompanying increase in size.

A common phrase heard in regards to strength training is "If I lift weights, I will get too big." This is not necessarily always true. For one thing, there are many things that determine how large someone's muscles will grow besides solely strength training. An individual's genetics predispose them to gaining muscle size either quickly or slowly. There is also a genetic limit to how large an individual's muscles can grow.

Generally speaking, females don't have the traits necessary to grow extremely large muscles no matter what type of strength training they do. Some may object, using the example of female body builders. However, these women are full time weight lifters and abide by an extremely strict diet. It is also safe to assume that some of these women may utilize performance-enhancing drugs. With these misconceptions out of the way, it is important to note that certain strength training protocols can be executed to maximize strength without greatly increasing muscle size.

Another common phrase heard in regards to strength training is "I lift weights consistently, but can't seem to get any bigger!" As mentioned before, some people are not genetically predisposed to greatly increasing muscle size. However, certain strength training protocols can be used to help individuals achieve their greatest muscle mass gains.

Regardless of training to increase muscle size or not, to improve strength you should try to lift to failure. When pressing, pulling, or pushing as hard as possible with good form, if you cannot complete the repetition you have reached failure. Generally, acquiring strength either WITH or WITHOUT large gains in muscle size, lies in the repetition range in which you achieve failure.

For moderate gains in strength without a large increase in muscle mass you should aim to reach failure at a repetition range of 15 to 25. For greater gains in strength with an accompanying large increase in muscle size you should reach failure at a moderate repetition range of 8 to 12. For the largest gains in strength with a moderate increase in muscle size you should reach failure at a low repetition range of 4 to 6.

The number of sets for each of these three repetition ranges should be inversely proportional to the number of reps (i.e. 2 sets for the high rep range, 3 sets for the moderate rep range and 4 sets for the low rep range). Sets should be separated by significant rest time (i.e. 1 min for high rep range, 2 mins for moderate rep range and 3 mins for low rep range).

In order to achieve failure at a specific rep number you must adjust your weight accordingly and be extremely disciplined to only count full reps in good form toward your achieved reps per set. When you can achieve more reps than the desired repetition range, you should increase your weight. When you cannot achieve a number of reps within your goal rep range, you should decrease your weight. By doing this you will always remain in the same rep range and gradually increase the weight.

While the exact numbers of sets, reps, and rest time can be debated depending on which studies you read, what is important is reaching your goals: always lift to failure and dictate muscle mass gain through achieving failure in different rep ranges.

NIH FEDERAL CREDIT UNION



NIH  
Federal Credit Union

Did you know the financial decisions you make today as a student can affect your future credit history? Make the smart choice and join the NIH Federal Credit Union (NIHFU)

to enjoy our no-hassle, no-gimmick products, including Student Visa cards and Student checking. Since 1993 we've been the official credit union of The George Washington University and we've helped thousands of GW students get on the path to financial fitness. With the most ATMs on campus of any financial institution, we're convenient, too. Check us out today!

NIH Federal Credit Union • 2100 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
301-718-0202 • www.nihfcu.org

THE GEORGE  
WASHINGTON  
UNIVERSITY  
WASHINGTON DC



jetBlue  
AIRWAYS™



NIH  
Federal Credit Union



Patrick Rahm

## WHAT A PAIN IN THE... BACK!

It has been reported that eighty percent of us will suffer from some form of lower back pain (LBP) during the course of our lives. With this in mind, it's worth inquiring into how we can best avoid or lessen the severity of this frustrating and possibly debilitating condition. It might be impossible to completely avoid, but there are some measures we can take to help prevent the development of chronic LBP.

The cause, severity, and duration of a case of LBP will depend on several potential factors. These factors range from previous and/or current health status, injury history, exercise history, and daily activities. The most direct cause of lower back pain is trauma or injury to the lower back usually caused by overuse or overexertion from lifting a heavy weight improperly. Some other potential causes of LBP are age, obesity, poor posture, stress, and poor physical condition.

It's important to acknowledge the symptoms of LBP to help determine the severity of the condition. If LBP is accompanied by fever, pain when coughing, or weakness in the legs, it may indicate a serious condition that may require medical treatment. Some of these serious conditions may include a bulging disc, sciatica, spinal degeneration (with age and overuse), spinal stenosis, osteoporosis, fibromyalgia, and spondylitis. While some of these conditions will require the assistance from a health professional, there is much we can do to avoid and prevent LBP on our own.

The first and most simple thing we can do to prevent LBP is to improve our posture. Good posture should be maintained throughout the duration of daily activities. This posture is generally characterized by sitting or standing with head tall and chin retracted, shoulders pulled back and down, and a neutral lumbar spine (lower back). Whether moving, lifting, standing, sitting, or lying, a neutral lumbar spine is a strong and safe position utilized to prevent LBP. This neutral lumbar spine position is identified as the lower curve of the natural "S," achieved when a healthy person stands upright with good posture.

Once this neutral position is identified, it is important to learn how to maintain it. To achieve this position while sleeping on your back or on your side, place a pillow underneath or between your knees, respectively. If you sleep on your stomach, you should instead attempt one of the two aforementioned sleeping postures. If you have to sit or stand for long periods of time, it has been suggested that there is no ideal posture, and that it is best to change position and/or move every 20 minutes. When moving from lying to sitting, from sitting to standing, and especially when lifting a weight or performing many exercises, one should learn to actively "brace" in this neutral position. This natural brace is performed by simultaneously contracting ALL the muscles of the trunk in order to stabilize the neutral lumbar spine. It takes some practice, but once performed correctly, this brace can help prevent LBP.

To enhance prevention against LBP, it is important to first do endurance training, then strength training of the core muscles. A simple progression would be to perform isometric (not moving) prone and side bridges, then bodyweight trunk extension, flexion, and rotation movements. To develop great strength in the muscles of the trunk, any free-weight standing multijoint exercises are very effective. These include many exercises such as the dead lift, front or back squats, and overhead presses. Remember when performing these exercises, the braced neutral position will keep your lower back safe, stable, and strong.



## RELAXATION THROUGH MEDITATION



Carolina Camarao

Relaxation techniques can be very helpful for relieving the stresses of daily life. Meditation is a very useful technique that is easy to learn. You can focus your meditation on breathing or imagery. When you are preparing to meditate it is important to find a quiet place where you will not be interrupted. It should be a clutter free space that you use every time you decide to meditate. Whether you choose to focus on your breathing or imagery is not important, but it is important to use a technique that you are comfortable with and that works for you.

Imagery relies on visualization. You can start by visualizing a favorite vacation spot or a place where you always experienced positive things. The place you imagine should have positive associations. It is important to use a lot of detail to really bring your imaginary surroundings to life and help you to better focus. Once you have your place, you can start to tune into the sounds you might hear around you. For example, if you pictured yourself on a beach you could think of the smell of salt water and the sound of the waves washing up on the shore.

Focusing your attention to your breath is another way to clear your mind. You should focus on gentle inhales and exhales, trying to create a soothing rhythm with breaths. Focus should remain on the breath. When your mind starts to wander, just bring your attention back to your breath. With practice you will notice that your mind will start to wander less and you will be able to stay focused for longer and longer periods of time.

When starting your meditation practice it is important to set aside 5 minutes in the morning or evening, keeping the time of day consistent, and slowly building up to more. It is important not to get discouraged if you have trouble concentrating for even 5 minutes at first. With a consistent daily practice you will learn how to keep your focus and feel less stress throughout the day.

## THINK YOUR DRINK

Most people pick up their favorite "fad diet" book to lose weight. Most of these books focus on eating certain foods to decrease your calorie intake or even go as far as recommending that you remove certain foods from your diet. However, food is not the only culprit. What about what you drink? Calories in drinks are available to consumers on food labels, but how often do you think your drink?



Erin Davis RD, LD

An example of how calories add up in a typical day, we will follow college freshman, Joe. Joe's morning routine includes going to Starbucks and purchasing a Café Mocha with whipped cream (360 calories) on his way to class. He decides to meet his friends for lunch to go to Wendy's and orders a combo meal with a medium coke (200 calories). He heads to Gelman Library to study for the afternoon and stops at the vending machine on the way to get a Minute Maid Apple Juice (16oz. = 220 calories). He decides to go work out at the gym and stops by the Juice Zone to purchase a small mango smoothie (180 calories) before dinner. He chooses water for dinner (0 calories). His total calorie intake for the day from beverages alone comes to 1,060 calories!!!!!!



**Drinks can add up. It is time to think your drink! Here are some simple ways to reduce your calories from drinks.**

- Choose diet soda, reduced calorie juices, and forgo the extra flavoring and whole milk in specialty drinks such as coffees.
- Learn to read food labels!! Remember that many nutrition labels show the amount of calories per serving. However, there can be multiple servings in one container of the product). For example, a 20 oz soda may say 110 calories per serving, however, the servings per container are 2.5, which equals 275 calories.
- Look for ingredients on the food label such as high fructose corn syrup, dextrose, sugar, fructose, sucrose— if you see any of these ingredients mentioned early on in the list, the product is probably a high sugar drink, low in nutritional value.

**Reducing your calories by approximately 500 calories a day allows a person to lose 1-2 pounds per week. Lowering your caloric fluid intake alone may do this. Remember to always think before you drink!**

# 2008 INTRAMURAL SPORTS

## IM SPORTS SPRING 2008



Ethan Siegel

After a memorable fall semester, Intramural (IM) Sports returns in the spring with a new slate of programming. The semester will be kicked off with a kickball tournament on January 25th and 26th.

On January 27th, 5 on 5 basketball tips off for what should be an exciting season. Teams will battle for the chance to compete for the campus championships played on the hallowed court of the Smith Center. Winners will receive the coveted IM Sports Championship t-shirts. They will also join the pantheon of previous champions with a team picture on the IM Sports website.

In addition to basketball, the 4 on 4 volleyball league will be held in Lloyd Gymnasium on the Mount Vernon Campus. Arena football also returns to GW during the month of February.

After spring break, floor hockey will be played with IM Sports providing all necessary equipment including helmets, sticks, and goalie pads. For soccer enthusiasts, a 4 on 4 league is also scheduled. This indoor soccer league's "field" is the length of one basketball court, making the game especially fast-paced and fun.

During April and May IM sports holds its annual softball league, which is played on the fields of West Potomac Park. This league is a great opportunity for participants to take advantage of beautiful spring weather in DC.

All students and LHWC members with a valid GWORLD card are welcomed to play. Simply stop by the Office of Campus Recreation to fill out team entry and roster forms. For a complete list of entry deadlines, visit us on the web at <http://gwired.gwu.edu/gwellness/intramuralsports>.