



Wellness Roundup

Volume 1, Issue 2

December, 2006



FUN FAMILY FITNESS

By Lisa Noack, c.p.t. & Certified Youth Fitness Trainer

Nutrition & Wellness
Committee
Lang Ranch PTA

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Active Family Fun Around Town	2
Teaching Altruism to Children	3
Banana Bread Recipe	3
Reaching Your Weight Loss Goals	4
How to Beat Cold and Flu Season	4
Kid's Corner	5

Helpful Websites:

◆ www.power-systems.com

◆ www.shapeupshop.com

Two sites for great fitness-oriented gift ideas for kids and adults.

◆ cookinglight.com

Get healthier versions of all your favorite holiday foods. It includes great recipes for appetizers, main courses and desserts.



The holidays can play havoc with your family's health as late nights, parties and traveling quickly unravel the healthiest of habits. During Christmas break, especially if the weather is chilly or wet, kids indoors can bear a startling resemblance to corn kernels in a popper; they make lots of noise, have little direction, and have a great likelihood of ending up in front of the T.V.

Physical fitness, crucial to children's health, need not be as elusive during the holidays as snow in T.O. and can diffuse boundless energy. The trick is to find indoor and outdoor activities that work up as much laughter as sweat. Simply put, if an activity is not fun a child will not want to do it.

To get started it helps to schedule regular time throughout the week for physical fitness. Let kids take

turns choosing an activity for the family—they will feel a sense of control by being involved in the process. Kids can choose their own activities as well and create a colorful chart to log fitness activities for each family member. The Centers for Disease Control recommend that kids need a daily hour of activity, but this can be accumulated throughout the day.

Parents need to be good role models: If children do not see the adults in their lives taking interest in hobbies and participating in activities that promote fitness they are less likely to adopt active lifestyles. Join in, if only for 10 minutes, and toss a football or jump rope. Kids will take notice and its much more fun than a treadmill. Your health is as important as your family's...the old cliché that you can't give from an empty well is especially true during

the holidays as we struggle with too many tasks and too little time. If you feel all the family time is pushing you to the breaking point, stop, breathe, and get out for a walk. Priorities are more likely to fall back into place.

Here are some ideas for thinking outside the gym when it comes to fitting in family fitness:

INDOORS:

- ◆ Have kids "act out" a story as you read it.
- ◆ Create a family video of exercise routines or invent a new dance.
- ◆ Have a "commercial challenge" while watching T.V. (e.g. do 30 sit-ups or jump up and down 100 times before the commercial ends).

(Continued on Page 5...)

HOLIDAY EATING SURVIVAL GUIDE

By Lisa Ross

Special holiday foods and goodies are a huge part of our holiday celebrations, but as we all know, too much of these hard-to-resist treats can add those unwanted "holiday pounds." But depriving and restricting ourselves from our favorite holiday foods isn't realistic,

according to the American Dietetic Association. They say "we can eat well and still enjoy our holiday favorites, even rich desserts. Healthful holiday eating is not an oxymoron—planning is the key." Here are a few tips to help maintain your weight and

stay healthy this holiday season.

- ◆ Don't starve yourself before a party or special meal. It will cause overeating. Eat healthy light meals during the day and have a

(Continued on Page 2...)

HOLIDAY EATING SURVIVAL GUIDE ...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

- combination of a few of the following BEFORE the party: a piece of fruit, a handful of raw almonds, some whole grain crackers and a piece of low-fat string cheese.
- ◆ Have a “game plan” for your meal before loading up your plate. Look at all of the choices and decide which foods you MUST try and which ones you can do without. For example, skip the dinner roll and the cheese and crackers (which aren’t special holiday foods anyway) if you can’t resist a few tasty Hanukkah latkes or a comforting scoop of candied yams. And don’t sit near the buffet!
 - ◆ Walk away from it to prevent extra snacking!
 - ◆ EAT SLOWLY and enjoy what’s on your plate. Eating too fast can lead to unnecessary extra helpings. Take the emphasis off of food and socialize!
 - ◆ Don’t forget about liquid calories. Although eggnog is a delicious holiday drink and a big tradition in many homes, it has 400 calories a cup! Try this option: Pour some eggnog into a cup of coffee in place of creamer— you’ll still get that eggnog taste with much fewer calories. Also, limit your alcohol intake. Some mixed drinks can contain 500 calories!
 - ◆ Stay as active as you possibly can. Bundle up the family and take a WALK (not a drive) around the neighborhood to look at the holiday lights. If you take the kids ice skating or roller skating, get out of the bleachers and join them!

Happy Holidays to all and to all a good meal!

Lisa Ross



Active Fun for Kids & Parents by Debbie Aleman, cpt

Everyone loves the two weeks of ‘relaxation’ that Winter Recess brings—especially the hard working principal, teachers, students and staff at Lang Ranch Elementary. But sometimes after a couple of days at home parents start to hear choruses of “I’m bored!” in place of their favorite holiday tunes. What do you do with the kids when the weather outside is cold and blustery? Here are some fun places around town where kids can channel their excess energy. Parents can even join in and rediscover activities that most of us haven’t tried since childhood.

***Boulderdash—** An indoor rock climbing gym that offers after school kids classes and a winter camp program. It’s also a great place for birthday parties or reserve a ‘party’ for anytime you want to have a small group of kids and/or parents try out the climbing walls. It costs \$25 a person for 2 hours of fun, including someone to work the ropes and give you climbing tips. Check out their website for details and pricing: www.BoulderdashClimbing.com (557-1300 / 880 Hampshire Rd, Suite A in Thousand Oaks, off Westlake Blvd.)

***The Lakes Ice Skating Rink—** A seasonal outdoor ice rink with lots of holiday charm. Open Dec. 2 thru Jan. 7, from 10 am till 11pm. It’s \$8.00 per person to skate and skate rentals run \$3.00. (Cash only) Located at 2200 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd., next to the Civic Arts Plaza.

***Easy Street Arena / Iceoplex—** For indoor ice skating all year around try this rink in Simi Valley. Public skating hours vary so check their website or call for details. Prices run \$8.50/adult, \$7.00/children under 12. Skate rental is 3.00. 805-520-7465 EasyStreetArena.com

***Rollerdome—** If roller skating is more your style try the RollerDome at 950 Ave. de los Arboles. They offer open skating every Saturday & Sunday from 1-3:45pm and special Tuesday & Thursday holiday hours (1-3:00pm) Dec. 26 thru Jan.4th.



Check out Rollerdome.com or call 805-493-8800 for details.

***Monarchs Gym—** There are two locations for this gymnastics gym and both offer a ‘Parents Night Out’ every Friday from 7-10pm. You don’t have to belong to the gym to take part and the kids get 3 hours of tumbling, pizza and a movie, while the parents get a chance to catch up on errands or enjoy some quiet time together. Pricing runs \$20 for 1 child and \$32 for 2 children. Check out their website at Monarchsgym.com for more details. Newbury Park: 805-375-4663, Agoura Hills: 818-889-3634.

Don’t be intimidated if you or your children haven’t tried these activities before; just give ‘em a try! Approach new things with an open mind and a good sense of humor and you might just discover a new favorite sport. Don’t worry about being good at it— just enjoy watching the look on your children’s faces as they challenge themselves in new ways. Spend time together and enjoy the most important gift of the holiday season...

a happy, healthy family!

TEACHING ALTRUISM TO CHILDREN

By Karen Begun, Psy.D., Licensed Clinical Psychologist



An important character trait in the healthy social development of children is altruism and parents play a vital role in the development of this characteristic. Research conducted on prosocial behavior in children, including honesty, generosity, kindness and altruism, have found that children who observe their parents modeling altruistic behavior are more likely to identify with them and develop this kind of behavior. Parents can find many wonderful service opportunities for families in the community. During the holidays, parents can encourage their children to give to others by participating in local food and toy drives. Children are usually happy to participate in this type of sharing, for they recognize that they have more than enough food and toys at home and it is not hard for them to understand how sad it is that someone might not have enough. During winter vacation, children can also help parents sort through their own outgrown clothes and then help parents deliver these items to a clothing donation organization.

Parents can teach altruistic behavior by encouraging their children to participate with a group that promotes service projects for kids, such as Scouts or religious organizations. Once children become

aware of the needs of others, some are moved to respond to those needs in a very direct way and parents can help in coming up with ideas for things children could do to address the problems they see. For example, one ten-year-old boy started a blanket drive, which grew into a larger program that provided coats, hot coffee and sandwiches to the homeless in his community. Children will benefit from the self-esteem and sense of belonging that comes with contributing to their own community. Furthermore, when children grow up in a family where sharing and giving are a way of life, they experience the importance, as well as the joy, of giving to others.

Some Service Opportunities for Families:

- 1. The Rain Project in Camarillo**-provides a structured, safe environment for individuals and families willing to help themselves break out of the cycle of homelessness, unemployment, and public assistance. 805-389-3308
- 2. MANNA Food Pantry** of the Conejo Valley- 805-497-4959
- 3. Lutheran Social Services**-Thousand Oaks- Provides meals for the homeless in Ventura County 805-497-6207
- 4. Agoura Animal Shelter**- Volunteers and donations.- 818-991-0071
- 5. Ventura County Jewish Family Services**- a non-denominational organization providing educational programs and support for individuals and families in Ventura County- 805-641-6565.
- 6. Food Share of Ventura County**-Ventura County's only regional food bank-888-449-3663
- 7. Penny Lane** in North Hills- provides residential treatment, foster care, adoption services, and transitional housing for emancipated foster youth- 818-892-3423.
- 8. Catholic Charities** in Thousand Oaks-805-496-1113
- 9. Shoes That Fit** in Claremont- non-profit children's charity providing children with new shoes and clothes so they can attend school in comfort and with dignity. 909-482-0050
- 10. Habitat For Humanity**, Ventura Co. office- builds and rehabilitates houses for families in need- a world leader in addressing issues of poverty housing. Offers youth programs. 805-485-6065
- 11. Meals on Wheels**-805-496-2009
- 12. Salvation Army**- 805-527-1070

Happy Holidays! Karen

Tasty Banana Bread By Lisa Ross

This recipe is healthier and more filling than ordinary banana bread because it is made with whole wheat flour. It's nice to have on your brunch table during the holidays. Serve with fresh fruit and hot drinks...m-m-m!

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 overripe bananas
- 1 1/2 cups plus 3 Tbsp. whole wheat flour
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 tsp. baking soda

Dash of salt

1 egg

1/4 cup (1/2 stick) butter, softened

1/2 cup light sour cream

1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Mash bananas in a large bowl. Add flour, sugar, baking soda, salt, egg and sour cream. Add softened butter to bowl. Stir until just blended. Fold in chocolate chips. Pour into loaf pan sprayed with non-stick spray.



Bake for 70 minutes, or until toothpick comes out clean. Let cool before slicing.

Happy Holidays, and enjoy!

Tips for Reaching Your Weight Loss Goal By Melissa Dorval, R.D.

With the New Year fast approaching, after the extra helpings of pumpkin pie, eggnog and other treats, I wanted to provide you with a list of the Top 10 Lifestyle Behaviors for successful weight loss. It is a known fact in the scientific community that being just slightly overweight can increase your risk for heart disease, cancer and diabetes. This is huge, as these diseases are the leading causes of death in our nation. Therefore, your children and families will benefit from your focus on achieving and maintaining your goal weight. There have been many long-term studies informing us of the lifestyles of those who are successful at weight loss; individuals who have lost over 50 pounds and have maintained that weight loss for over 5 years. So why do we latch onto the fad diets, when science has uncovered the lifestyles of the successful? Often we are impatient and want to lose weight, or reach our other goals, quickly. This year let's follow a new approach one with the greatest chance for success. I would recommend that you review the below list and choose two or three (or more) principles on which to focus in 2007. Your family will thank you.

- **Eat Defensively** – you cannot win the weight loss game with a weak defense! Keep those binge foods out of our house and away from your office.
- **Exercise** – there's no time....you make the time! A goal of at least 30

minutes per day, 5 days per week. Find something you enjoy and stick with it.

- **Seek guidance** – being accountable is the key! Seeking help from your physician or a registered dietitian (for a referral, go to www.eatright.org), or a group such as Weight Watchers, will help to make your actions accountable.
- **Weigh yourself frequently.** Successful weight losers weigh themselves often. A few days per week, but note that weight (water) fluctuations of 2-3 lbs are normal. Weigh frequently and monitor yourself over the week or better yet, the month. You cannot gain or lose weight overnight, as it takes 3500 extra calories to gain or lose (3500 calorie deficit) just one pound.
- **Set realistic goals** – Weight loss is an exercise in patience. Be kind to yourself and know that losing weight takes time. Even a weight loss of 2 lbs per month can add up over the year. Just think at that rate, next year at this time you could be 24 pounds lighter!
- **Focus on health, not just weight.** Examples of this principle is eating nutrient dense foods, foods with fiber, keeping carbohydrates and fat under control. Eat a diet that takes care of your body; balance your intake to feel stronger and more energized!
- **Find out what's eating you.** If you are using food to cope with feelings such as boredom, loneliness, stress or

depression, it may be necessary to seek guidance from a therapist. Learning to deal with emotions without food is a necessary skill for successful weight loss.

- **Correct bad eating habits.** Examples of this are eating on the run, skipping breakfast, habitual snacking at night, etc. Beware of "junk" such as desserts, alcohol, high cal coffee drinks and pastries at your favorite coffee house. They all have whopping calories! Skipping meals will lead to disaster; you have to eat enough to stay in control.
- **Portion Control** – weigh and measure your food for a few days, to take the guesstimating out of the equation. Fill up your plate with produce (fruits and vegetables) make this the main event on your plate, with protein (chicken/fish) and carbohydrate (rice, pasta, potato) being your side dishes.
- **Keep Track with a Food Diary.** This can provide a large amount of self-awareness of your eating behavior. Decide what your "problem" areas are and monitor them. Is it your evening snacking, sweet treats, minutes of exercise, number of fruits and vegetables, carbohydrate servings? This can be tracked on a blank monthly calendar. People who track their food intake or behavior lose 60% more weight than those who don't.

Wishing you and your family a year of good health, good food and good friendship, Melissa.

By Melissa Dorval, R.D.

Beating Cold & Flu Season By Debbie Aleman, cpt

It seems that everywhere you go this time of year– school, the mall, family gatherings– you see people sniffing and sneezing. How do you avoid getting sick during this hectic holiday season? Here are some tips from Los Robles Hospital to help you get through the season snuffle free.

***Wash your hands-** This is still the most important thing you can do to avoid getting sick! Wash frequently and thoroughly- scrub with soap and water for at least 30 seconds.

***Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth-** Germs on your hands can spread and infect you.

***Don't re-use or share water bottles-** Germs can accumulate and spread. But don't skip the water- staying hydrated is essential to health, aiding in almost every process in the body.

***Get plenty of sleep and eat a balanced diet** to strengthen your immune system. Focus on plant based foods which are loaded with vitamins and antioxidants.

***Eat lots of zinc** to promote the production of white blood cells, critical for fending off colds. Good sources are low-fat yogurt and whole grains.

***Exercise-** It helps strengthen your immune system and relieve stress. Just keep the intensity low if you're feeling a little run down.

***If you do get sick- stay home!** As hard as it is during this busy season, staying home from school or work gives you a chance to recover and avoids spreading illness to others.

Have a healthy, happy holiday!

Debbie



KID'S CORNER

What special gift can you give that you can't wrap up?

Here's what our big hearted Wranglers had to say when we asked them this question...

"What special gift can you give that you can't wrap?"

"You can give the gift of love." Brooke Schneider, 4th grade

Lots of our Wranglers thought love was the best gift to give- like Jasmine Yang & Ali Blank, 5th grade, Joyce Huang, and Hannah Dye, 2nd grade

"Friendship" from Skyler Madigan, 2nd grade and Matthew Montroy, 4th grade

"1. Love 2. Kindness 3. If they live somewhere else you can give a plane ticket so they can come see you. 4. Talk to a person in a hospital. 5. Charity" Courtney Carr, 5th grade

"The gift of caring & love." Marissa Honorof, 4th grade

"A gift of caring and being kind." Amanda, 4th grade

"The gift of caring, kindness and love." Shireen, 4th grade

"Kindness" David Huang, 4th grade "Your heart" Nicholas Friedman, 2nd grade

"Healthiness" Lily Guo, 2nd grade "Good listening" Katelyn Ross, 1st grade

"You can give them happiness and good feelings with love and give them a warm feeling." Becca Simpson, 5th grade

"Hospitality and love." Lauren Chin, 5th grade

I think a parent must have snuck this one in, the writing was pretty fancy...

"Doing chores without being told." - Anonymous

But I think the gift everyone would love to receive this holiday season, and everyday, would be this from Griffin Goldberg, 1st grade "Kisses and love."



Fun Family Fitness... continued from page 1

- ◆ Designate an indoor play area where rolling, jumping and tumbling are allowed.
- ◆ Create an obstacle course using household items such as trashcan basketball, bean bag toss or "tile" hopscotch.
- ◆ Perceive chores as a chance to be active...blast Christmas music and have kids help.

OUTDOORS:

- ◆ Buy a simple pedometer and have each family member use it for a few hours and compare notes. Increase the number of steps each day.
- ◆ Although it's easier to shop alone

kids can benefit from "mall-walking" - park further from the entrance as well.

- ◆ Create "Olympic events" at a family party.
- ◆ Play "eye spy" or hunt for treasure as you take a neighborhood walk/jog.
- ◆ Don't forget to take advantage of our trails, parks and beaches just because it's winter—go for a hike or nature walk.

ANYWHERE:

- ◆ Use physical activity rather than food as a reward (take the family ice skating, etc.)

- ◆ Emphasize the importance of having fun and learning; avoid pushing to "win".
- ◆ Give fitness-oriented gifts with your child's interests/skill level in mind.
- ◆ Help your kids find something active that makes them feel successful.

The best presents you can give your children are the gifts of health and connection. Get in the spirit this year and create a new family tradition by spending time pursuing activities that are simple, fun, and improve fitness.

Have a safe, happy and healthy holiday season!

Lisa Noack