

TAKE CHARGE!



August 2022

Get Fit with HIIT

The Benefits of High-Intensity Interval Training

High-intensity interval training can help you get more bang for your exercise time. Practiced by elite athletes, HIIT is now a beneficial approach for average exercisers. You can practice interval training by simply alternating short bursts (about 30 seconds) of intense activity with longer intervals (about one to two minutes) of less intense activity.

Example: If you walk for exercise and you're in pretty good shape, you might add short bursts of jogging into your regular brisk walks. Or if you're less fit, you might alternate regular walking with periods of fast walking.

Example: You can use a stationary bike or rower for 30 seconds of cycling or rowing as fast as possible with high resistance, followed by several minutes of slower motion with low resistance.

You might typically complete four to eight repetitions in one workout, depending on how long you exercise. The time you exercise and recover will vary based on your activity and how intensely you exercise.



Note: Get your health care provider's okay before starting HIIT.

Benefits of interval training include:

Burning more calories: One study compared the calories burned during 30 minutes each of HIIT, weight training, running and biking. The result: Interval exercisers burned 25% to 30% more calories compared to non-interval exercisers.

Raising your metabolic rate: HIIT can increase metabolism for hours post-workout — using fat for energy rather than carbohydrates.

Reducing disease risk: HIIT training (like any exercise) helps reduce the risk of heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

Improving your numbers: You might gain some muscle, boost your muscles' ability to use oxygen, and reduce heart rate, blood pressure and blood sugar.

city events

Deferred Compensation Webinars

Leaving Your Legacy
Wednesday, August 3
 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
 Click [here](#) to register

Meeting the Challenges of Aging
Wednesday, August 10
 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm
 Click [here](#) to register

Plan for the Cost of Health Care in Retirement
Wednesday, August 17
 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
 Click [here](#) to register

Breathe Easy: Staying Healthy Amid the Smoke
Wednesday, August 10
 12:30 pm – 1:00 pm
 Click [here](#) to join

Self-Care: The Importance of Saying “No”
Tuesday, August 16
 11:30 am – 12:30 pm
 Click [here](#) to join

Self-Care in the Face of Adversity
Friday, August 19
 10:00 am – 11:00 am
 Click [here](#) to register

Breathe Your Way to a Better Life
Tuesday, August 23
 11:30 am – 12:30 pm
 Click [here](#) to join

Working Parents: Achieving Balance
Thursday, August 25
 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm
 Click [here](#) to register

“Be who you are. It’s easy to feel like you have to blend in, but it takes courage to live your life with conviction and embrace the person that you are.”

– Halima Aden

Stomach Pain and Stress

Your brain and your digestive system have a direct relationship. That's why almost everyone has felt butterflies in their stomach when nervous or even experienced stomach pain, nausea or other digestive problems when stressed about personal or work matters.

Of course, stress can be physical, such as barely missing getting in a car accident. And emotional stress can be related to a happy event, such as a wedding. But these stressful situations aren't constant.

It is ongoing stress, often related to work or personal relationships, which can keep your brain's stress response system — the flight or fight reaction — on high alert and impact other parts of your body. Your heart beats faster and your blood pressure rises. And the flight-or-fight response also causes delayed emptying of the stomach, potentially leading to heartburn, nausea and stomach pain. What's more, worrying about your stress-caused digestive symptoms can cause even more stress and more stomach pain.

Of course, any chronic or severe stomach pain should warrant a visit with your health care provider. But if your stomach pain is stress-driven, the Anxiety and Depression Association of America advises these self-care strategies to help soothe stress and calm related tummy ills.

- Take short breaks during the day. Practice slow breathing to dampen down your body's stress response. Inhale slowly, pushing your stomach out and then exhale slowly through your nose.
- Exercise — whether it's aerobics, a walk or doing yoga. Just 15 minutes a day can help reduce chronic stress.
- Learn to say **no**. Don't add to your stress level by taking on too many extra responsibilities.

Suicide Prevention

By Eric Endlich, PhD

Every 11 minutes, someone in the U.S. dies by suicide, which is one of the leading causes of death. What so many people want to know is: How can we predict and prevent these tragic, seemingly unnecessary deaths?

Unfortunately, while we might seek to identify the personality types of people at higher risk for suicide, it is exceedingly difficult to predict the behavior of an individual person.

Still, it's valuable to review the factors that put someone at higher risk of self-harm, as well as the interventions that are endorsed by experts and supported by research.

People who are more likely to commit suicide include individuals who:

- Have a history of suicide attempts.
- Engage in risky behaviors (e.g., reckless driving).
- Have experienced major losses recently.
- Have depression or bipolar disorder.
- Have been victims of violence or abuse.
- Are 75 or older.
- Are young (e.g., high school age) and gay, lesbian or bisexual.
- Are military veterans.
- Are Native Americans.
- Are males, especially those working in construction or mining.

Be concerned if you observe one or more of the following behaviors in someone:

- Oral or written comments about suicide.
- Preoccupation with death.
- Expressions of hopelessness or feeling trapped.
- Difficulties with eating or sleeping.
- Loss of interest in usual activities, such as work or school.
- Making arrangements for death (e.g., a will) or giving away important items.
- Stockpiling pills or buying a firearm.
- Decreased self-care.
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs.
- Social withdrawal.
- Dramatic mood swings or emotional volatility.



How to Help

Here are some key steps you can take to help someone who might be at risk for suicide:

1. Ask the person about thoughts or plans to harm themselves. Doing so does not increase the risk; in fact, it demonstrates that you care.
2. Remove access to means of self-harm, such as firearms.
3. Encourage the person to seek professional help if they haven't already. Medication and certain forms of therapy, such as **cognitive behavioral therapy** and **dialectical behavior therapy**. Free 24-hour hotlines are available, too: The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is **800-273-8255**. In case of imminent danger, call 911.
4. Consider ways you can support the person, whether it's simply offering to listen when they're upset, sending a caring note or doing practical favors for them.
5. Follow up after a crisis or hospitalization. Keep showing that you care.



Say Goodbye to Regrets

Don't let regrets about the past harm your present — and even your future. Everyone has regrets. But continuing to fret over opportunities lost or unfortunate decisions can negatively impact your mental and physical health. Studies show a high level of regret is linked to more depression, anxiety and insomnia.

Five ways to move past regrets:

- 1. Stop negative self-talk.** Avoid telling yourself you made a stupid decision or calling yourself an idiot. Practice self-kindness and remind yourself you'll make better decisions next time.
- 2. Distract yourself from obsessing over regrets.** Focusing your attention on socializing with friends or pursuing a new interest or exercise goal can help you move forward.
- 3. Use journaling to help you create new goals.** List the lessons learned from decisions you regret and use this information to plan and build a brighter future.
- 4. Take time for a reality check.** Just because you made a bad choice in a job, relationship or anything else doesn't mean you are doomed to repeat your mistake. And thinking what might have been would have been wonderful isn't realistic. You don't know how things would be different.
- 5. Consider counseling.** If regrets are negatively impacting your life, therapy with a mental health professional can help you stop repeating cycles of self-blame and empower you to move forward. Cognitive behavioral therapy is recognized as especially helpful in moving past obsessive feelings of regret.

Intermittent Fasting

eating smart

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

While most diets dictate *what* to eat, intermittent fasting dictates *when* to eat. Intermittent fasting is cycling between hours when you eat and hours when you fast (refrain from food). The most common pattern is to fast for 16 hours, but you can eat food for eight hours during an average day (the 16:8 method). Other plans include fasting for 24 hours once or twice a week (the eat-stop-eat method).

Some studies have linked intermittent fasting to weight loss, but that's not a surprise.

If you don't eat for many hours, you'll eat less overall, and that calorie reduction will lead to weight loss. But weight loss is not guaranteed, especially in people who continually consume more calories than they need during the non-fasting hours.

Studies also link intermittent fasting to lower LDL (harmful) cholesterol levels and reduced inflammation.

And since there are no restricted foods, it's easy to follow. **But before you consider intermittent fasting, there are some downsides to note.** Since it doesn't tell you what to eat, you don't learn about nutritious food or healthy eating habits. And while some can fast intermittently long-term, others find they are hungry, dizzy, tired and grumpy when they fast, and they have to stop.

Intermittent fasting is not recommended for people with a history of eating disorders. And research results on intermittent fasting for people with type 2 diabetes are mixed. Some show lower insulin levels, but others show poor blood sugar control and the risk of hypoglycemia. Speak to your health care provider or to a dietitian before trying this eating plan to see if it's right for you.



Grilled Fish with Watermelon Salsa

EASY recipe

1½ lbs tilapia, cod or other whitefish	2 cups chopped watermelon
1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil	1 cup chopped cucumber
½ tsp salt, <i>divided</i>	1 jalapeño, seeded and minced
1 lime, zested and juiced	¼ cup red onion, diced
	¼ cup freshly chopped cilantro

Set grill to medium heat. **Brush** fish with olive oil and season with ¼ tsp salt. **Place** fish on grill or in grill basket. **Grill** 4 to 5 minutes per side or until opaque, and set on serving platter. **In** a large bowl, stir together lime zest, lime juice, watermelon, cucumber, jalapeño, onion, cilantro and remaining salt. **Spoon** salsa over fish and serve with lime wedges.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 230 calories | 35g protein | 7g total fat | 1g saturated fat | 3g mono fat | 2g poly fat | 10g carbohydrate | 6g sugar | 1g fiber | 382mg sodium

Stay in Touch

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

Phone: 800-871-9525

Fax: 205-437-3084

Email: PBeditor@ebix.com

Website: www.personalbest.com

Executive Editor: Susan Cottman • Advisers: Patricia C. Buchsel, RN, MSN, FAAN; Jamie Lynn Byram, MBA, AFC, MS; Eric Endlich, PhD; Mary P. Hollins, MS, JD, CSHM; Kenneth Holtyn, MS; Reed Humphrey, PhD; Gary B. Kushner, SPHR, CBP; Diane McReynolds, Executive Editor Emeritus; Zorba Paster, MD; Charles Stuart Platkin, PhD; Cara Rosenbloom, RD; Elizabeth Smoots, MD; Margaret Spencer, MD • Editor: Aimie Miller • Designer: Heather Burke

The content herein is in no way intended to serve as a substitute for professional advice. Sources available on request. © 2022 Ebix Inc. All rights reserved. Unauthorized reproduction in any form of any part of this publication is a violation of federal copyright law and is strictly prohibited.

Personal Best® 1 Ebix Way, Johns Creek, GA 30097 • 800-871-9525 • fax 205-437-3084.

News & Notes

- **Health FSA Planning – Anticipate Your 2023 Healthcare Costs:** As you plan for electing the healthcare Flexible Spending Account during Open Enrollment, include known expenses in your calculation. Check with your healthcare provider in August or September for an estimate expected in 2023, such as prescription eyeglasses, contact lenses, non-emergency crowns, orthodontia, planned procedures and visits, or elective surgery.
- **Balancing Parenting and Work.** Finding childcare may be a challenge — your childcare benefit with Kinside is here to help. Activate an account or log back in at join.kinside.com/city-of-seattle. Use your employee email address to view real-time childcare openings, concierge assistance and preferred tuition rates at programs near you.
- **Open Enrollment for 2023 Benefits** runs Monday, October 3 through Friday, October 21. Mark your calendar and look for more information in the fall.

EXPERT advice — Elizabeth Smoots, MD

Q: How to stop snoring?

A: Nearly everyone snores occasionally, but it can sometimes become a chronic problem. Frequent snoring should be evaluated



by your health care provider, as it could signal **sleep apnea**. Other signs of possible obstructive sleep apnea include daytime sleepiness, loud snoring, breathing pauses and gasping or choking during sleep.

Lifestyle measures can help. Losing excess weight and stopping smoking can alleviate snoring. So can sleeping on your side instead of your back. Avoid drinking alcohol close to bedtime and aim to get seven to nine hours of sleep every 24 hours.

If you have sleep apnea, your health care provider may recommend **continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP)**, a device which involves wearing a specialized mask connected to a hose that delivers steady air pressure during sleep. A dental oral appliance that helps position your jaw, tongue and soft palate can sometimes be beneficial. Other options include treating nasal congestion and practicing upper airway exercises. Much less commonly, surgery may be advised for snoring.

Dirty Desktops

Here's something that may make you think twice about eating at your desk:

Researchers at the University of Arizona found that the average desktop has 400 times more bacteria than the average toilet seat. Here are some helpful tips to keep desktops and other work surfaces clean:



Make it a priority to spend the last five to ten minutes of your day to clear clutter from your desktop. **Bonus:** It will give you an organized, fresh start to the next workday.

Clean your keyboard. Shut down your computer or laptop. Use a soft brush to whisk away trapped crumbs and dirt or use a can of compressed air to blow away dirt. Then, use a cotton swab slightly dampened with water or isopropyl alcohol to clean between the keys. Dampen (not dripping or soaking) a clean cloth with water or alcohol and wipe the keys.

Don't eat at your desk. If you must, keep crumbs away from your computer and thoroughly brush off and clean the desktop afterward. Wash your hands before returning to work.

Do a weekly purge of unnecessary papers. Either recycle them or file them appropriately.

Wipe down or dust your desktop and keyboard weekly. This will keep germs to a minimum.

TIP of the MONTH



Sticky Fish Solution

If you find your fish often sticks to the grill when you barbeque, here are some possible solutions. Instead of brushing your fillet with olive oil, try mayonnaise. It has enough oil to prevent sticking, and a neutral flavor that won't change the taste of your fish. You can also try grilling fish in a grill basket, on a wooden plank or on top of a bed of lemon slices. It also helps to only put fish on a blazing hot grill.