

Healthier Lifestyles

“Providing people with the tools, motivation and inspiration to develop a healthier lifestyle”

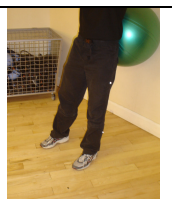
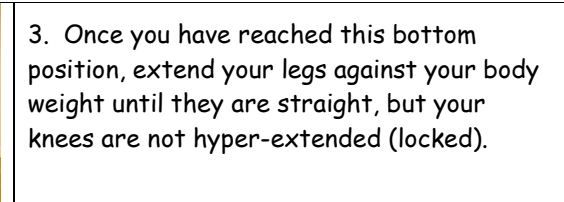

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to read the second Healthier Lifestyles monthly newsletter. In order for this newsletter to be successful and to fulfil its objectives, I need it to reach as many people as possible. Therefore I would appreciate it if each and every reader could forward it on to anyone who might be interested in improving his or her current level of health. Also encourage friends, family and colleagues to visit my website (www.healthierlifestyles.co.uk) and sign up for the free monthly newsletters. Thank you in advance for your support, **Andy Smith** (Healthier Lifestyles).

If you wish to contact me regarding any of the information or promotions in this newsletter you can email me at healthierlifestyles@hotmail.co.uk

Exercise of the Month – Swiss Ball Squat

The Swiss ball squat is a perfect exercise for people of all abilities and fitness levels as it can be used as a transition from leg press machines to free-weights, or as an excellent leg exercise in its own right. Beginners can perform the exercise with no added weight, encouraging stabilising muscles to activate, in addition to utilising the quads, glutes and hamstrings. Advanced exercisers can perform the exercise with additional weight, by holding dumbbells whilst performing the squats.

<p>1. To perform the exercise, place a Swiss ball against the wall and lean against it, so that the small of your back is in contact with the ball. Stand with your feet at shoulder width apart, and pointing forwards. If you are not using additional weight, hold your arms directly to the front of you, encouraging proper spinal alignment.</p>		
<p>2. From this start position, slowly bend your legs, lowering your body weight, until the angle at your knee joint is approximately 90 degrees.</p>		<p>3. Once you have reached this bottom position, extend your legs against your body weight until they are straight, but your knees are not hyper-extended (locked).</p> 
<p>4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 for the desired number of repetitions (between 8 and 20 repetitions depending on your goals).</p>		

Website development

I have now started to add information about maintaining and improving your overall health to my website (www.healthierlifestyles.co.uk). In the Health Information section I have discussed many of the factors that affect a person's overall level of health and what can be done to make improvements. This section is by no means complete, but I will be regularly adding information to my site, so be sure to check again soon!

Sponsorship – London Triathlon 2006

As some of you will be aware, I am competing in this year's London Triathlon. The event will be taking place at 10am at the Royal Victoria dock on Sunday 6th August. I am hoping to raise money for my four chosen charities (Leukaemia Research, The National Autistic Society, British Red Cross and Get Kids Going). If you would like to make a donation to support my chosen charities and me then please go to my donation site (www.justgiving.com/andygsmith). All donations are welcome and greatly appreciated and if you would like to come along to watch the event, then please contact me for more details.

PT Promotions

I am currently offering 6 personal training sessions for just £150. You not only receive 6 training sessions, but you also receive a concise, goal specific, training programme to follow throughout the month. I have discussed the

importance of regularly changing your training programme in the Personal Training section of my website. Many gym goers carry out the same training routines for month after month offering no changing stimulus to their body. If this sounds like you, why not book some personal training sessions to push yourself and start making some dramatic improvements?

Ask Andy

As a Personal Trainer, I am often asked about diets, which ones work for weight management and which ones don't. This month I have decided to address some of these questions in my monthly article. It is important to remember that the best way to manage your weight and to improve your health is to take control of both your diet and your exercise regime. I hope this article answers some of the questions you have about diets!

Specialist Diets versus Healthy Eating -

Which approach is best for weight management and health maintenance?

I have put together this article to outline some of the advantages and disadvantages of both specialist diets and healthy eating. I must emphasise that these are my own views and opinions, and I accept that not everyone shares or supports them! I have tried to offer evidence for the statements I have made throughout this article.

When I refer to specialist diets I am generally referring to diets such as the Atkins, Cabbage Soup, Drop a Jean Size, Weight Watchers, Slim-fast, low carbohydrate diets and low fat diets, to name but a few. But what do all of these diets have in common?

The majority of specialist diets try to give people a simple to follow approach for restricting calorific intake, hence leading to weight loss. This is often dressed up as something more than just calorie restriction, but the outcome is still the same. Usually this is achieved by limiting or removing one or more of the macronutrients (carbohydrates, proteins or fats) from some or all meals throughout the day. So how does this impact on the nutritional requirements of the human body?

One example is the Atkins diet, which aims to alter the way the body produces energy by virtually removing carbohydrates from every meal. In Dr Atkins' book he refers to a state called Ketosis, where fats are converted directly to energy when carbohydrates are not present. This diet has been seen to be very successful at achieving weight loss in a number of studies. But how can a diet be good for you if it alters your body's natural energy production mechanisms? Ketosis only takes place when the body is starved of carbohydrates, but the central nervous system relies solely on carbohydrates for energy. How can this promote good health?

Another example of these types of diets is low fat diets, which acknowledge that fat accounts for a greater number of calories per gram than protein or carbohydrates. Hence they aim to minimise fat intake to reduce calorie intake. Although saturated fat can be harmful to the human body in large quantities, essential fatty acids play many important roles such as temperature regulation, hormone synthesis and most importantly, the absorption of many vitamins and antioxidants. Restricting fat in your diet can therefore lead to vitamin deficiencies, which can have a dramatic effect on a person's overall health.

I'm sure by now you are feeling confused about what diet you should follow in order to manage your weight and to maintain your health. My advice would be to aim to follow a general healthy eating plan, whilst trying to evaluate and approximate your calorie intake. For many of you this will not be information that you haven't heard before, but you may have found it difficult to develop a healthy eating plan for yourself. On my website I have tried to provide the information that you will need to construct this plan. Take a look at the section on 'Balancing Calories' and the 'Healthy Eating Guide' (both in the Nutritional Information section of my site) and use the information to modify or overhaul your existing diet or eating habits.

So what are the disadvantages of following a healthy eating plan? The only thing that can be construed as a disadvantage (and wrongly so!) is that you will not see the miracle weight losses you see when you start a specialist diet. To address this point, (and to promote healthy eating) more often than not the vast quantity of weight lost in the first week of a specialist diet is due to water losses. When you hear of people losing 3 or 4 kilos in one week of dieting you may be amazed, but let me try to quantify this for you. To lose 1 kg of fat you must burn 7000 calories more than you consume and to lose 4 kg of fat would require a calorie deficit of 28,000 calories, but on average most people's bodies burn around 2500 calories per day (17,500 per week). So as you can see it is almost physically impossible to lose 4kg of fat in 1 week. If you follow a healthy eating plan, taking in 500 calories less than you burn each day, you will lose 0.5 kg per week, every single week and your body will still receive the nutrients it requires to maintain a good level of health. You will also be developing an understanding of healthy eating, which you can employ for the rest of your somewhat longer life!!!