

WELL SAID.

CGI Business Solutions – February 2014

**Q. What can I eat to prevent heart disease?
A. Making an effort to eat healthy foods is one of the best things you can do to prevent heart disease.**

Start by taking a look at what you eat now. French fries, cheeseburgers, microwave meals, soft drinks, processed foods, fast foods, and pastries all contain high levels of saturated fat, trans fat, sodium, sugar, or other ingredients that aren't good for you. If you eat a lot of these foods, you're at risk for high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and other health problems. These conditions can damage your arteries, which can lead to heart attack, stroke, and death.



Choosing the right foods can help prevent heart disease and even help if you're already at risk. And it's easy to do: Just make plant-based foods the biggest part of your daily diet.

Fruits and vegetables At meal time, make half your plate fruits and vegetables. Brightly colored fruits and leafy green vegetables are best. They have high levels of antioxidants that can help prevent plaque build-up in your arteries. Ultimately, this protects your heart. Aim for 8-10 daily servings of fruits and vegetables.

Nuts & Seeds Nuts and seeds contain healthy, unsaturated fat. This kind of fat helps lower your bad cholesterol level, which can protect your heart from disease. Nuts also contain omega-3 fatty acids and other nutrients that can improve the health of your arteries and reduce your risk for blood clots. Try to eat a handful of nuts (about 1½ ounces) each day.

Legumes Legumes, such as black beans, kidney beans, and peas, contain the highest amount of fiber of any food group. High-fiber foods can lower cholesterol levels, reduce your risk for diabetes, and keep you feeling hungry to avoid weight gain. All of this can lead to a healthier heart.

Adult women need at least 25 grams of dietary fiber per day for best health. Men need at least 38 grams per day.

Whole Grains Whole grains contain bran, fiber, and other nutrients that help lower your blood sugar, cholesterol levels, and triglycerides (or fat) in the blood - all good for heart health. Eat at least three servings of whole grains per day. A variety of grains is best. Try oatmeal, shredded wheat cereal, whole-grain breads and pasta, brown rice, rye crisp, and quinoa.

Eating a plant-based diet is the best way to reduce your risk for heart disease. If you're not used to eating this way, start small with a healthy snack. Gradually add more fruits, vegetables, nuts, legumes, and whole grains to your eating plan. Then top off your new eating habits with 30 to 60 minutes of exercise on most days for a healthier heart.

Source: www.wellsource.com

It's Cold Outside

Tips to sweat it out

Nose dripping. Eyes watering. Cold air freezing your throat, filling your lungs and drifting from your mouth in the form of an exhausted little cloud. Exercise outside in the wintertime, and you'll enjoy these sensations. Consider them points of pride for braving the cold as most others pack into stuffy gyms.



Suspicious of anyone who'd voluntarily go outside -- let alone exercise! -- in 30-degree weather? You'll probably warm up to the idea if you go about cold-weather exercise the right way and let your body adjust to the low temperatures. Follow these tips:

Acclimate. That first workout in the winter air might have seemed like a cruel joke -- with your legs feeling stuck in the mud and the cold air icing your lungs and throat. But chin up: Although it may be hard to believe now, your body will get used to the cold weather. In order for your body to adjust, however, you'll have to continue braving the outdoors for your workouts. When you first start exercising in frigid temperatures, curb your expectations. You probably won't reach your personal records because your body isn't as naturally warmed up as it was in June, and because it's yet to acclimate. Throw in wind or snow, and your results are even more likely to be affected. It may take longer for your body to reach your typical speed, so leave more time to warm up. And tweak your workouts to be a little lighter at first, to help your body adjust. After a few weeks of consistent outdoor workouts, your body will likely adapt.

Find a buddy. Now that you know you must resign to a few uncomfortable outdoor workouts before your body adjusts, you may want to find someone to hold you accountable for getting out there. Find a group, coach or friend who will count on you to brave the elements with them.

Hydrate. Even if it's not as obvious as in the summer, you're still sweating during cold-weather workouts and pushing yourself, so stay hydrated.

Dress the part. Wear layers, which help manage the combination of cold air, body heat and sweat. Remove a layer when you start to perspire; put it back on when you're cold again. Don't underestimate the importance of covering your hands, feet and ears, as these parts are particularly vulnerable to frostbite.

Be sure to sport your sunscreen, because, yes, the sun still shines in the winter. The rays can be intense as they reflect off fresh snow. And if you're out in the dark, wear bright, reflective outer layers so drivers, bikers and others can see you.

Change after your run. Whatever you wear, change out of your clothes soon after you complete your workout. You're more likely to get sick if you're sitting around in cold clothes, especially if they're wet from sweat, rain or snow. Even if you don't take a shower, changing into dry clothes will help.

Know when to take it inside. There is a point when layers and acclimation only go so far -- when uncomfortable weather becomes unsafe. Check the weather conditions before your run. If the wind chill is extreme or the temperature is well below zero, it is best to skip your workout or taking it inside. Also be conscious of footing conditions, like ice.

Source: <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/>

What about meditation?

Meditation isn't a practice about "doing" but rather one of "being" with yourself as you are. The goal in meditation is not to change anything about what is going on inside your mind or to stop your thoughts, but to simply help you rest within yourself. Some people refer to meditation as conscious relaxation.

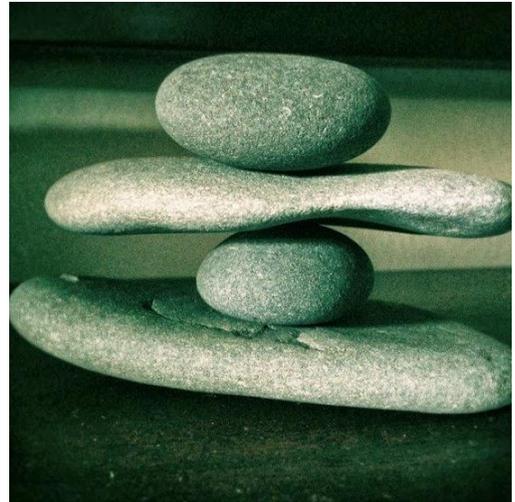
There are many types of meditation: sitting, mantra, walking, dance, yoga, and spiritual contemplation. Research has shown that Transcendental Meditation®, mindfulness meditation, chanting, Bible study, and personal prayer all offer similar benefits.

Meditation practices are often rooted in spiritual practices, but many people practice meditation outside of a religious context. Through meditation you become aware (mindful) of thoughts, feelings, and sensations, and observe them in a nonjudgmental way. This results in you becoming calmer and physically relaxed.

Meditation is also a powerful tool for regulating emotion and increasing self-awareness. People also meditate to help their anxiety, pain, depression, stress, or insomnia. Meditation has been found to lower blood pressure and contribute to a stronger immune system.

Results of a remarkable study published in *Stroke* (journal of the American Heart Association) showed that the accumulated fatty plaque on artery walls actually diminished in people who meditated 20 minutes twice a day! These physical benefits of meditation are possibly due to the body's reaction to a reduced amount of stress hormones, decreased heart rate, lower blood pressure, reduced oxygen consumption, or even changes in brain-wave activity.

It is now well established that the meditative state can be associated with changes in electrical function of the brain, and recent imaging studies suggest that there may actually be changes to the structure of the nervous system as well.



Most types of meditation have 4 common elements:

- 1. A quiet location.** Meditation is usually practiced in a quiet place with as few distractions as possible. This is particularly helpful for beginners.
- 2. A specific, comfortable posture.** Depending on the type being practiced, meditation can be done while sitting, lying down, kneeling, standing, walking, or in other positions.
- 3. A focus of attention.** The easiest place to begin is to focus on your breath - as it enters your body, travels to your lungs, and then flows out again. Using visualization, you can fill your mind with positive thoughts or pleasant memories, and feel yourself there. Try focusing on a natural, relaxing setting, like near a brook babbling over stones. Some people focus on sensing the presence of a spiritual power.
- 4. An open attitude.** This means you let distractions come and go naturally without judging them. Rather than suppressing distracting or wandering thoughts, you gently bring your attention back to the focus.

As research continues to demonstrate the strong correlation between spirituality and good health, people are discovering that meditation is a simple and practical way to find peace and calm wherever they are, regardless of the situation. They feel rested, de-stressed, and clear-headed.

Source: www.wellsource.com

