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Recess Newsletter July 2010

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In The News

Super Secret Fitness on Kink.fm

Nothing Says Feminine...

like shortened calf muscles and cankles.

We'll start things off with one for the ladies.

Everyone's experienced the discomfort that comes along with a pair of ill-fitting (but oh-so-fabulous, we know!) pair of heels. But ever felt like your legs were still in pain while standing sans shoes on solid ground?



This month, [NPR reports](#) on a British study that shows women who wore high heels all the time--think almost every day for years on end--had 13% shorter calf muscles and thicker Achilles tendons than those who spent more time in flats.

Because shorter and bulkier muscles and tendons are harder to stretch, "the habitual high heel-wearers in the study couldn't stand flat on the floor without discomfort." Ouch!

To keep legs muscles long and stretchable, vary the height of your footwear, and make sure to give your calves plenty of TLC. After a day on your feet, perhaps try some of these [calf-stretching suggestions](#) from Yoga Journal.

[Find a wellness plan that treats your feet \(and the rest of your body\) right>>](#)

Find Us Online!

And tell us what you want to know.

(.mp3)

LiveWire on OPB (.mp3)

No Place Like Work. Recess Client Rose City Mortgage in Oregon Business.

Fun Wellness: Recess Client Bullivant Houser Bailey in Oregon Business Magazine

Portland Business Journal: Smoking Cessation

Recess' Blog: You'll Laugh. You'll Cry. You'll Lose Weight Just Reading It.

Here's news you'll probably take sitting down (if you're at a computer), but you don't have to. Jump for joy, Recess has a social life! Or a social networking life, at least.

When we're not moving, snacking, or out to prove that corporate wellness doesn't have to suck, you can find us hanging out at the same place you probably spend hours visiting every day--the internet!

Join our groups on LinkedIn and Facebook to connect with others who are down with the idea that work doesn't have to be done sitting still, and follow us on Twitter for tips, tricks, and wellness-related quips.



Talk about a virtual escape...

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Sitting Proves Tough to "Undo."

And is it possible that there is an app for that?

And now onto a study that was initially conducted on middle-aged men, but whose results can be considered by all ages and genders.

The New York Times Health Blog reports on the revisiting of results from a

study that asked men about their exercise habits and about, err, lack of exercise habits (think time spent watching TV or riding in the car).



As expected, the men who had large periods of inactivity in their lives were more likely to develop heart problems. But what's being re-looked at now is the unexpected side note that many of the men who sat long hours and had these heart problems also exercised.

As the article puts it, "The men worked out, then sat in cars and in front of televisions for hours, and their risk of heart disease soared, despite the exercise. **Their workouts did not counteract the ill effects of sitting.**"

For those who work on the trade-off system (ie, I went to the gym yesterday, so I can be a lazy bones all day today), this is not good news.

Tatiana Warren, a graduate student in exercise science at the University of South Carolina and the lead author of the study of men who sat too much, puts it this way: "**Regular workout sessions do not appear to fully undo the effects of prolonged sitting.** There seem to be different pathways involved in the beneficial physiological effects of exercising and the deleterious impacts of sitting. **One does not undo the other.**"

The good news is that it doesn't take much to be "not sitting." In the olden days, time off from work was spent engaging in light-intensity activities. We're talking super light intensity here--cleaning, cooking, laundry, etc. Now it seems like the general trend is that we won't take the time to push a vacuum ourselves, but we will take the time to video our cat riding a robot vacuum and then post it to the internet.

Warren recommends warding off the dangers on couch-potato syndrome with a couple of steps. Literally steps. Beyond structured exercise sessions, find more way to incorporate movement into your daily routine: "Stand up. Pace around your office. Get off the couch and grab a mop or change a light bulb the next time you watch *Dancing With the Stars.*"



Take a few steps back from this study and you realize that middle-aged dudes aren't the only ones in danger of "over-sitting." One of the first things kids "learn" how to do in school is SIT STILL, right?

The [Wall Street Journal Health Blog](#) reports on a study presented at an obesity conference that suggests that "community-based interventions that involve schools, parents and health-care institutions really work best in kids under age five. After that, it gets a lot tougher."

Basically, if we want an active population, we've got to start young. This isn't necessarily new news, but the striking part was really the difficulty in which implementing these active and healthy eating programs faced with an older, adolescent audience.

Marlene Schwartz, the deputy director of the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity at Yale University, explains that, "There's sort of an inverse relationship between an intervention like this and the complexity of an individual's food environment."

In other words, preschool kids are pretty much limited to the food given to them by adults, but as kids get older their ability to pick and purchase their own food increases - plus they've seen a lot of commercials for less-than-healthy foods over the years.



"If we were capable of making as big a change in the environment of an adult or adolescent [as with a preschooler], we'd probably see as big a change," Schwartz says.

As adults, it's a big responsibility to control most of the food our kiddos have access to along with encouraging lots of activity. While that's a tough but possible feat, one that may prove even harder is attempting to lure kids away from the inexorable draw of TV and internet.

But we all know quiet time is sacred time as a parent, and maybe you've found that letting your kid play some games on your iPhone provides a few moments of sweet, silent freedom.

If you're going to be downloading some apps for your kids, check out this website--conveniently titled [Apps for Healthy Kids](#).

As the site explains, Apps for Healthy Kids is actually a competition. *It's a part of First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! campaign to end childhood obesity within a generation. **Apps for Healthy Kids** challenges software developers, game designers, students, and other innovators to develop fun and engaging software tools and games that drive children - directly or through their parents - to eat better and be more physically active.*

While there are apps that help kids identify healthy foods, create balanced meals, and see the relationship between consuming calories and exercising, the whole idea still leaves us scratching our heads a little bit. How can an activity that requires kids to sit still to complete be a part of the "Let's Move!" campaign? I guess that's where the challenge of the competition comes in.

Through a little bit of guidance and the mixing of technology and activity, perhaps these kids can be on a better track, not destined to become a generation of "sitters." In the meantime though, I still wouldn't count on them getting excited about pushing a vacuum.

[Stand up while you click this! >>](#)

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Local to Portland, OR? Call 503-282-5560.