

September 2008



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Facts about the Heart and Cardiovascular System

1. It's smaller than a bread box.

The heart is actually a hollow muscular organ roughly the size of a man's fist. It weighs about 300 grams in men and 250 grams in women.

2. The whole system.

Your body has 60,000 miles of blood vessels, which oxygenates your body's tissues, take away waste material, and help regulate the body's environment (temperature regulation, pH balance). If the blood vessels were placed end to end, they would stretch around the world three times.

3. Thinner than a human hair.

The smallest blood vessels in the human body, called capillaries, are 50 times thinner than human hair.

4. The heartbeat is actually silent.

The sound that you hear from the heart is the valves of the heart closing. The heartbeat itself is actually a silent contraction of the heart muscles.

5. There is a lot of force in that little bread box.

The heart pumps blood through its arteries with enough pressure to lift a column of blood five feet in the air. It takes approximately 23 seconds for blood to circulate through the entire body. A single blood cell makes almost 3,000 round

trip cycles through the cardiovascular system in a day.

6. And the beat goes on.

The heart beats on average about 72 times a minute. When you reach the age of 65, your heart has beat about 2.5 billion times. The heart rests between beats. If this rest time is added up over a lifetime, the heart would stand still for almost 20 years.

7. Blue blood?

Blood inside the body appears blue until it is combined with oxygen. Blood is red and the more oxygen that it combines with the brighter shade of red it becomes.

8. Out with the old, in with the new.

In a period of one month all the red blood cells in the body are replaced with new ones.

9. Sorry gals.

Men usually have a potentially greater endurance capacity than women due to physiological differences that can't be changed. For example, men have bigger hearts (both actually and relatively) than women. Men also have higher percentage of red blood cells than women, which allows for more capacity in carrying oxygen to the muscles.

Jeff Hosta, B.S., CSCS

DIET

by Ann Marie Orr

The word "diet" usually brings thoughts of self denial to mind. Most people think the word diet means caloric restriction and strict guidelines. The word Diet has a much more general meaning - what you eat. In this column we will discuss what we consume, its benefits and also the potential hazards. I would like to have an open forum of discussion and welcome any thoughts, information or comments to help us navigate the enormous ocean of information.

We are constantly bombarded with advertisement and infomercials on this topic. Unfortunately there is often also misinformation promoting certain foods or products used to persuade you into a purchase.

I would like to discuss the importance of "natural" nutrition and whole foods in a fitness diet. I believe it is very important to firstly practice a diet consisting largely of whole foods focused on balanced nutrition.

Supplements such as multiple vitamins, fish oil and vitamin B are great to enhance an already variegated and complete diet, but don't think for a minute that relying on supplements as a main source of nutrition is fine – it isn't. Don't eat burgers, fries and diet sodas and think your vitamins will take care of everything else. When selecting your food choose fresh whole foods. This is to say fresh fruits, vegetables, cheeses, nuts and lean proteins not frozen dinners, canned food and processed carbohydrates. Nutrition from whole natural foods is by far superior to vitamin supplements; this should be the main focus of an active adult diet.

I tell my clients that nutrition is like a well, in order to keep it full you must constantly put in a wonderful variety of foods and supplements so the well never runs dry. If you're well runs dry during training it can lead to sickness and other health complications.

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Training Alchemy 101

by Robert Prins

This month I would like to discuss the importance of integral aspects of training. This includes the appropriate ratios of proper training, nutrition, and rest. Often, trainees will force their efforts into one or maybe two aspects into their fitness lifestyles. The results often times fall short of the trainees expectations...This is because it is a necessity to include all these aspects.

Proper Training:

This includes weight resistance training, flexibility exercises, and cardiovascular/aerobic training. Each time you come into the gym to train, you must put an honest effort towards improving your current physical condition each and every time. If all you do is the same amount as before, you have no progression. Ask yourself, did you really reach exhaustion during your training or did you stop short because it became overwhelming? If you fall into a "comfortable" training zone that doesn't challenge your physique, why would you see progression? You must challenge yourself to make your body

change.

Nutrition:

This I feel is the most elusive and confusing aspect of the fitness lifestyle. The body needs the necessary nutrients to recover and heal from the damage that is inflicted on it from training and activity. To be safe in the scope of this subject, stick with whole balanced foods that contain nutrient dense calories. Avoid calorie dense foods that are virtually void of essential nutrients. If you look at the back of the nutritional label and there are a lot of chemical names then stay away. The body is like an automobile. The higher the octane fuel, the better the motor runs...Nutrition affects you emotionally and physically.

Rest:

When you are in the gym training you are doing microscopic damage...When you rest, your body heals this damage by assimilating the nutrients out of the foods you eat to recover. Rest includes healthy sleep patterns, meditation, and relaxation. When you are neglecting necessary rest, your body cannot heal properly. Your body cannot progress physically because you are diminishing your gains when there isn't sufficient rest. When training, more isn't always better. Your training must be balanced out to provide adequate rest time in any training program. Try to sleep at least 6-8 hours per night. A post workout cat nap is great if your schedule permits. It is even necessary to take small breaks from training sometimes to improve your conditioning!

In summary, include all of these aspects into your training lifestyle to provide satisfying results for yourself. Your body will tell you what it needs if you listen closely to it...

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