



WELLNESS AT CYPRESSWOOD

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February is **National Heart Health Month** and frequently a time for us to focus on changes we can make in our diet and exercise habits for improved cardiovascular health. While these areas are important, we sometimes overlook one of the greatest and most enjoyable areas for investment in our long-term health, that of relationships with others.

People who have satisfying relationships are happier, have fewer health problems, and live longer. Additionally, lacking strong social support and connections has a seriously detrimental impact, as demonstrated by depression rates, cognitive decline, and even mortality rates.

Why are relationships important? Relationships trigger the release of stress reducing hormones (oxytocin and dopamine), as well as improving the function of our coronary arteries, insulin regulation, and immune system. So just what does it take to develop relationships that result in health benefits? It's probably easier than you think, and it can take place in many ways. As you would expect, there is no one answer that will fit every person and there are specific benefits that result from many different types of relationship patterns. Wondering about how to maximize the benefits of your daily interactions?

Joli Gunther YOGA Instructor and Clinical Social Workers shares these suggestions:

1. Share Laughs for Your Heart

From increasing our immunity, to improving our brain function and blood pressure, laughter has benefits that impact our entire body. Find people you enjoy laughing with...play games with your children, watch a silly movie with your spouse, or try a new experience (perhaps your first yoga class?) with a lighthearted friend. Laughter doesn't require a deep relationship and its benefits are well documented. Increased blood flow, respiration, and heart rates result in improvements in cardiovascular function and blood pressure, as well as insulin regulation. Not surprisingly, laughter also improves our response to pain, resulting in quicker healing and less need for medication.

2. Touch for Your Heart

Cuddle your kids a little longer. Give your spouse a big kiss in the morning. Treat yourself to a massage. Each of these actions maximizes the relationship related health benefits of touch. As humans, we are hardwired to seek out touch through its effects in increasing oxytocin (the cuddling hormone) and dopamine (strongly linked with our reward system). These hormones help us to bond with others, mitigate the negative impacts of stress, and even speed healing of heart tissue after it has been damaged, while lowered levels are associated with depression. As any positive touch can result in these benefits, find ways to include it in your days. Rub a loved one's shoulders, shake hands or lightly touch when greeting others, and don't be afraid to hug a family member when you say good bye.

3. Celebrate Others for Your Heart

While touch is part of affection, choosing to focus on the positive aspects of our relationships is another way to maximize the health benefits of our relationships. Expanding on the practice of gratitude, you can choose to take the time to recognize the gifts that others bring into your life. It can be helpful to start with the people that we enjoy the most. A simple practice is to write down a few things about another person for which you are thankful each week. You can also choose to recognize the contributions that others have made to your life in the form of a thank you letter or journal entry. Lastly, choosing to practice these acts of gratitude in relationships with which we struggle can be an enormously effective way of ameliorating the negative impacts of these relationships on our health and stress levels.

Not surprisingly, there is no single type of relationship or interaction that is key to our overall health. Just like the complexity of our lives and our connections with others, the benefits of relationships come from many interactions including those of the hormonal, cardiovascular, and neurological systems of the body. While relationships are naturally occurring and essential to our health, investing in and improving them as we would with any other area of wellness can result in the greatest levels of fulfillment, health, and disease resistance over time.

Lastly, Cultivate a Relationship with Yourself

Find your me time. Self-care is an important practice that will allow you to be present in your relationships. Many people find that a good workout is rejuvenating and gives them the energy they need to invest in relationships. Allow your self to take the time to indulge in a hobby, watch a movie in the middle of the day, read a book, whatever brings you pleasure and sparks a sense of wellbeing.

The More You Do This, the Lower Your Risk for Depression

Dr. Christine Bradstreet

Guest Contributor



*There is a powerful protector against depression other than exercise and diet.
The risk for depression was lowered by nearly 50% in people who do one simple thing...*

Cultural outings like going to museums, films, plays and exhibits may help prevent future depression.

This one thing is fun and without some of the common resistance that you might feel about getting more exercise or changing your eating habits.

The British Journal of Psychiatry published the findings of a study that looked at the relationship between cultural outings and depression. The results were astounding.

Over 2000 people over the age of 50 were tracked for 10 years. Going on a cultural outing as infrequently as every few months lowered a person's risk for depression by 32%.

Even more remarkably, going on a cultural outing once or more a month resulted in a 48% reduced risk for depression. Everyone benefited. The same hefty reduction in depression was noted across the board. Your income, your wealth, and your level of education didn't make a difference. Everyone can experience a decrease in depression risk by going on a few cultural outings each year.

"Cultural outings are an often-missed prevention for depression. People know the benefits of eating their five-a-day and of exercise for their physical and mental health, but there is very little awareness that cultural activities also have similar benefits."—Dr. Daisy Fancourt

Our brains need balance. We're not going to develop our full health potential without variety and balance in our lives. Just like you can't cut out an entire macro nutrient group and expect to build a healthy body, you can't ignore cultural stimulation and expect a healthy mind. Pick a variety, there's so much to choose from! And it doesn't have to take a bite out of your budget either. Take in sculptures and art on a walk through the city, appreciate the different styles of architecture, go hear some live music, go to your local museums, support the theater programs offered.

None of these things must cost you much money. There's one catch. To get long term benefit, you have to take these outings regularly. But that's hardly a catch, so get out there and enjoy the culture!



Dr. Christine Bradstreet is a natural health and wellness expert and life enrichment coach. After over 20 years of practice as a Doctor of Chiropractic, she retired from practice to spend more time studying spiritual and metaphysical approaches to healing. She lectures and provides personal health and lifestyle coaching and metaphysical healing in person and via Skype. You can see more about Dr. Bradstreet and the programs she offers at www.christinebradstreet.com

**Cypresswood Ladies Attending Exercise Express.
It's FUN!!**



Classes and Workshops to Enhance Your Physical Health and Mental Wellness

Mindful Breathing & Stretching:
Mar. 14th,

Cost: \$10.00/class
Haven
Kristie

The 2nd Thurs. of every month Feb. 21st (skipping Valentine's Day),

April 11th...

Location: 301 3rd St. NW (Old Town Square) Suite 200 Winter

Mats provided. Bring a small blanket or pillow for extra comfort!

Mindfulness is the process of bringing one's attention to experiences occurring in the present moment. Mindfulness is not meditation but rather the ability, with practice to declutter your thoughts and enjoy your presence in the moment.

We will focus on breathing to enhance relaxation and full body stretching to increase range of motion and manage muscle tightness. No registration needed.

Exercise Express:

WH

Cost: &7.00/class

Dee & Kristie

Mondays and Thursdays at 9:30am (bring light weights)

Location: Cypresswood Community Room, 1099 Clubhouse Road,

Cost: \$5.00 or..
Silver Sneakers
Dee

Fridays at 9:00am

Location: Laws of Fitness 2836 Recker Hwy. Winter Haven

Cost: \$7.00/class
Dee

Fridays at 10:30am

Location: 301 3rd St. NW (Old Town Square) Suite 201 Winter

Haven

Fun strength workout with weights, balls, bands, and heart pumping cardio moves. Tone your muscles, improve your stamina, finish with stretching. Standing or seated, your choice.

Fitness Boxing for the 50+:

Wednesdays at 10:30am

\$10.00/class Kristie
registration needed.

Location: Tiger Vascular, 1007 6th St. S.E. Winter Haven. No

Jab, hook, and uppercut your way to full body fitness. Great workout for Parkinson's Disease, proven to improve balance, stability, and coordination. Make this class your own and do what feels good to you. This is what you've been looking for to add to your fitness program. Bring water, towel, and gloves if you have them, available on site for purchase.



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MEET YOUR TRAINERS

**Deanna
Certified**



Contact Kristie at... krhealthconcepts@aol.com or 863-651-9580 if you have questions.