

Farewell from Coach Ashley

Good morning, Fitness Center Members!

We're excited to share our September/October 2025 newsletter with you a few days early, as this will be my final edition with you. My last day at KSC will be this **Friday, August 29**, as I've accepted a new role as the Assistant Director of Fitness Facility Operations and Risk Management at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University—an opportunity that gives me room to continue growing professionally.

Before I ever set foot inside the fitness center as an employee, I understood the meaning of service before self. It's been my guiding principle throughout my career, and my time here at Kennedy Space Center has been no exception. Over the years, I've had the privilege of connecting with an incredible community of engineers, researchers, technicians, first responders, administrators, and so many more who make KSC what it is. Those daily conversations, small wins, and shared moments in the fitness center have been the highlight of my time here.

Because my departure comes just before this edition's scheduled release, we're sending the newsletter out a few days early so I could share this message with you directly. I am deeply grateful for the trust you've placed in me—whether it was during a coaching session, in a group class, or through programs like 8 Weeks to 5K and the KSC Walk Run. The experience I've gained here will travel with me, shaping how I serve in my new role and ensuring that I can continue to support and guide others, including future KSC employees, in the years ahead.

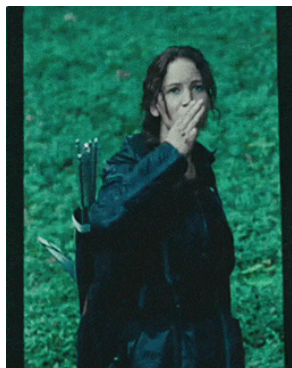
Thank you for letting me be part of your wellness journey. You've challenged me, inspired me, and reminded me daily why this work matters. I'll carry those lessons forward, along with the same energy and commitment I brought here from day one.

If you'd like to stay connected beyond KSC, you can find me on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), or [Instagram](#)—I'd love to continue sharing wellness ideas and staying in touch.

In your service,

~Coach Ashley

Ashley Cowart, MS, NSCA-CPT, TSAC-F





KSC FITNESS CENTER

Latest news and bulletin updates

Tuesday,
September 2, 2025

Ashley Cowart, Wellness Specialist

Kristopher Schweitzer, Wellness Specialist

BEARING THE WEIGHT OF CHILDHOOD OBESITY



Picture Description: A child joyfully tosses autumn leaves into the air, capturing the playful spirit and energy of the fall season.

Childhood obesity is a complex chronic condition that happens when a child is above a healthy weight for their age, height, and sex. It is defined as having a Body Mass Index (BMI), for age, at or above the 95th percentile in children aged two years and older. Childhood obesity has reached epidemic levels in the United States. While obesity was uncommon in children long ago, it is now the most prevalent metabolic and nutritional disorder. According to the Center for Disease Control, approximately 1 in 5 children and adolescents in the US are obese. Furthermore, the CDC reports that obesity rates increase with age. For children aged 2-5 years, 13.4% have obesity, while 20.3% of children aged 6-11 years are obese and 21.2% of adolescents aged 12-19 are obese. Due to the rising prevalence of obesity in children and its many adverse health effects, it is being recognized as a serious public health concern.

Causes of Childhood Obesity:

Lifestyle Factors:

- **Diet:** Consuming high-calorie, low-nutrient foods and sugary drinks, and eating larger portions are major contributors.
- **Physical Activity:** Lack of physical activity and increased sedentary behavior, such as excessive screen time, are linked to obesity.
- **Sleep:** Poor sleep patterns and inadequate sleep duration can also contribute to weight gain.

Environmental Factors:

- **Access to Healthy Food:** Limited access to affordable and healthy food options, particularly in low-income communities, can make it harder for families to make healthy choices.
- **Safe Spaces for Play:** Lack of safe and accessible places for children to play and be active can also play a role.

Genetic and Biological Factors:

While lifestyle plays a significant role, genetics and certain medical conditions can also influence a child's weight.

Health Consequences:

- **Increased risk of chronic diseases:** Childhood obesity is a major risk factor for developing type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, heart disease, and other conditions typically associated with adulthood.
- **Joint problems:** Excess weight can put extra stress on joints, leading to conditions like osteoarthritis.
- **Respiratory issues:** Asthma and sleep apnea are more common in children with obesity.
- **Psychological and social problems:** Children with obesity may experience bullying, social isolation, low self-esteem, and mental health challenges.
- **Long-term health risks:** Obese children are more likely to become obese adults, increasing their risk of developing chronic diseases later in life.

Prevention and Management:

- **Promote healthy eating habits:** Encourage a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean protein. Limit sugary drinks and processed foods.

- **Encourage physical activity:** Make physical activity a part of daily life through play, sports, or family activities. Aim for at least one hour of moderate to vigorous physical activity per day for children.
- **Establish healthy sleep routines:** Ensure children get enough sleep, as sleep plays a vital role in weight management and overall health.
- **Limit screen time:** Reduce excessive screen time and encourage alternative activities.
- **Seek professional guidance:** Consult with a healthcare provider or a registered dietitian for personalized advice and support.
- **Advocate for healthy environments:** Support policies and initiatives that promote access to healthy food, safe places for physical activity, and healthy lifestyle choices.

“5-2-1-0” Rule:

Childhood obesity can have profound effects on children’s physical health, social and emotional well-being, and self-esteem, indicating an immediate need for better awareness as well as multifaceted approaches for prevention and intervention. September is National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month, providing everyone affected by this disorder an opportunity to take action. The Childhood Obesity Foundation encourages the “5-2-1-0” rule of thumb as a set of guidelines to help fight this growing health crisis. Here are simple ways to get the whole family involved in promoting a healthy lifestyle for children.

5	2	1	0
•Five or more veggies and fruits per day •Eating healthy doesn’t have to be challenging. Adding more fruits and veggies to your plate will improve your children’s diet. Including at least one fruit or vegetable element in each meal and a snack will ensure that you hit this daily goal. Lead by example and include healthy foods in your meals as well. This way, the child won’t view fruits and vegetables as a boring option or a punishment. Having meals together will also allow you to monitor their food intake in a healthy manner.	•No more than two hours of screen time a day •These days it is certainly a battle to limit screen time; however, it’s a crucial part of leading an active and healthy lifestyle. Reducing your children’s screen time will open their schedules for other activities and erase the temptation to snack while watching television or browsing a device.	•At least one hour of physical activity per day •Carving out at least one hour in the day for exercise will put your child on a healthier path. There are many fun ways to encourage your child to be physically active. The key is to find something they enjoy so they don’t begin to resent physical activity. Suggest a family walk or bike ride to get everyone involved. Or, if your child is a sports lover, sign them up for after-school sports so they can get their physical activity done in a fun group environment.	•Zero sugary drinks •Sugary drinks, such as sodas, sports drinks, juices, energy drinks, etc., are the largest source of calories and added sugar in the U.S. diet. Cutting out these drinks can significantly affect the number of calories children consume. Often, liquids are not what immediately registers as a dessert or sugary treat. Therefore, a soda accompanied by other unhealthy foods can do double the damage to your children’s health.

References:
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024, May 10). *Childhood obesity facts*. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.
<https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/childhood-obesity-facts/childhood-obesity-facts.html>

Elevate Your Fitness with Group Exercise!

Looking to add energy and variety to your workouts? Our **Group Exercise Classes** are designed to help you build strength, improve flexibility, and boost endurance—all in a supportive, community-driven environment.

Why Join a Class?

- ✓ **Stay Motivated** – Energizing workouts led by expert instructors
- ✓ **Build Community** – Exercise alongside fellow KSC employees
- ✓ **All Levels Welcome** – Modifications provided for every fitness level

Class Lineup

- **Buffed & Balanced:** A strength-based class using body weight and optional weights for a total-body experience.
- **Stretch:** Improve flexibility, balance, and mobility through guided poses and movements.
- **Circuit Training:** A fast-paced, high-energy workout combining **strength, endurance, and cardio**.



New to Group Fitness?

No worries! Every class is beginner-friendly, and our instructors will guide you every step of the way. **Bring a coworker or friend** and make your workouts even more fun!

 Find Your Class!

Visit the [Group Exercise Schedule](#) to explore class times, instructor details, and descriptions. This resource is updated regularly so you never miss a workout opportunity.

Let's **move together, get stronger, and make fitness fun!** See you in class!

Picture Description: A diverse group of four fit individuals sits on a gym floor, engaging in a post-workout high-five and sharing smiles. The industrial-style gym setting features large windows and a relaxed atmosphere.

Kennedy Space Center’s Health Education & Wellness Program (HEWP) has the honor of hosting and supporting the following events in September and October

2025 Flu Clinic

Mark your calendars! HEWP will host a one-day flu vaccination clinic this September to help you stay healthy through flu season.

-  **Date:** Wednesday, September 24, 2025
-  **Time:** 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
-  **Location:** OSB I, Room 2406

Important:

- Employees must bring their insurance card.
- Please email Brittany.Freeman@nasa.gov to pre-register.



Picture Description: Illustrated poster for the KSC 2025 Flu Clinic showing a masked healthcare worker giving a flu shot to a patient, promoting vaccine availability and insurance card requirement.

Fall into Safety & Health (FISH)

Join us in supporting this annual event focused on promoting safety, health resources, and overall well-being for the KSC workforce.

-  **Date:** Wednesday, October 8, 2025
-  **Time:** 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
-  **Location:** CCHQ Café

We hope to see you there!!! Keep an eye on the KSC Daily News for more details!



Picture Description: Two cyclists ride along a quiet, tree-lined path on a cool day, highlighting the benefits of outdoor exercise for both fitness and relaxation.

KSC's Breast Cancer Awareness Event

Show your support and learn more about breast cancer awareness, prevention, and resources available at KSC.

-  **Date:** Thursday, October 9, 2025
-  **Time:** 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
-  **Location:** OSB II, Room 5109

We are excited to invite you to an uplifting event where three incredible panelists will share their personal stories of survivorship, followed by the annual walk on the OSB II Shuttle path, in support of Breast Cancer Awareness Month! Their journeys of resilience and strength are sure to inspire and encourage everyone in attendance. We are also honored to welcome back **Dr. Sharon Noori**, who will be available to answer your questions and provide valuable insights. Don't miss this opportunity to be part of a community that celebrates hope and perseverance. T-shirts will be available for purchase through NASA Exchange. Keep an eye on the Daily News for more details.

POC: Susan Currie (321) 609-7012.



Picture Description: A bright pink breast cancer awareness ribbon featuring the text "KSC" at the top and "2025" written on a rocket design across the ribbon. The bottom reads "Breast Cancer Awareness," symbolizing Kennedy Space Center’s support for breast cancer awareness in 2025.

Brittany Freeman, Wellness Coordinator

Breast Cancer Awareness

Breast cancer awareness gets a lot of attention in October, not only because it is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, but because of its’ prevalence, affecting about 270,000 women in the United States, per year. About 42,000 of those women die from breast cancer, per year, making it the deadliest type of cancer among women (skin cancer is the most common, resulting in about 2,960 deaths in U.S. women, per year). Breast cancer also occurs in men at a rate of about one in every 100 diagnosed with breast cancer, and though more common in women who are 50 years old and older, it affects younger women too. In fact, the occurrence of breast cancer in women under 50 years old is rising, and according to the Breast Cancer Research Foundation, it is now the top cause of cancer deaths among U.S. women between 20 and 49 years old. For these reasons, awareness is important for you, and your loved ones!

For women diagnosed with breast cancer before 40 years old, the cancer tends to be more aggressive, for several reasons, including genetic predisposition, overexpression of HER-2 (a protein that aids in cell growth), negative hormone receptor status and predisposition to a more aggressive type of breast cancer, triple-negative breast cancer (TNBC). Because symptoms may not be present until cancer has progressed, risk factors are helpful to determine if regular testing is needed earlier than normally recommended.

Risk factors for women under 40 include:

- 1. **Having a relative who meets one of the following descriptions:**
 - diagnosed with breast cancer before 50 years old
 - a male relative who was diagnosed with breast cancer
 - had cancer in both breasts
 - had ovarian, pancreatic or metastatic prostate cancer
 - had TNBC
- 2. **If one’s first menstrual period occurred before 12 years old**
- 3. **If one’s first pregnancy occurred after 30 years old or never had children**

If one of the above risk factors applies to you, discuss it with your healthcare provider to discuss early/regular testing recommendations.

Symptoms vary and may not be present until cancer has progressed, hence the importance of knowing one’s risk and recommended tests. However, if the following symptoms occur, be sure to inform your doctor right away:

- Change in size or shape of the breast
- Pain in the breast
- Nipple discharge besides breast milk
- Noticing a new lump in the breast of underarm area

This information can be distressing, but there are many ways to decrease one’s risk of breast cancer and improve overall health, including:

- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Regular Physical Activity
- Avoiding Alcohol
- Knowing the risks of hormone replacement therapy and/or birth control pills before deciding treatment plans
- Breastfeeding, if possible

Maintaining a healthy weight and physical activity help reduce risk for breast cancer and so many other health issues. The KSC Fitness Center is a great resource to help with these life-saving habits.

Picture Description: A bright pink ribbon, the international symbol of breast cancer awareness, is displayed against a teal painted background, representing support, hope, and advocacy for those affected by breast cancer.



References:

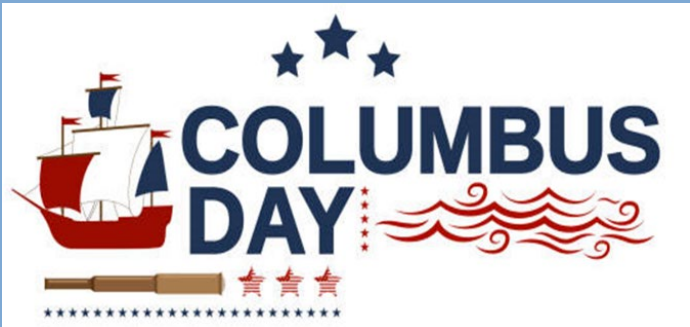
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Breast Cancer Research Foundation. (n.d.). Breast cancer in young women. <https://www.bcrf.org/about-breast-cancer/breast-cancer-young-women/>
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024, September 25). Breast cancer awareness: Saving lives through early detection. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. <https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/features/breast-cancer.html>

Columbus Day Closure Notice

In observance of Columbus Day, the KSC Fitness Center will be closed on **Monday, October 13, 2025.**

Normal operations will resume at **5:30 a.m. on Tuesday, October 14, 2025.**

Picture Description: A Columbus Day graphic featuring a red sailing ship, stars, waves, and bold lettering, symbolizing the national holiday.



Colin Andryc, Fitness Specialist

The Tactical Four

Supplements?! You mean that trending thermogenic from TikTok? Or maybe the test booster ad that pops up during every sports talk show? Not those. We're diving into foundational supplements, the kind that support your body’s core functions: rest, recovery, and growth.

First things first; supplements are designed to supplement your diet, filling in gaps where vitamins and minerals may be lacking due to everyday food intake. They’re not a cure-all, and it’s important to consult with a physician before using any of the supplements discussed here. While we’ll cover the key highlights, it’s up to you to do your own research and determine which forms, dosages, and products best suit your individual needs.

Magnesium

We will start off with **magnesium**. Up to 80% of people aren't getting enough of this mineral involved in over 300 biochemical reactions in the body. What happens if you're running low on magnesium? Well, the signs of low magnesium often overlap with signs of low testosterone because magnesium increases testosterone bioavailability. Run short and you'll experience low sex drive, adipose tissue gain, and difficulty putting on muscle. A deficiency is also linked to [depression](#), anxiety, brain fog, bad sleep, low energy, and even high blood pressure.

There are multiple formulas of magnesium that can be used as a supplement, but we will just pay attention to the two most common forms, magnesium glycinate and magnesium malate. Magnesium glycinate is highly bioavailable and known for its calming effects, making it ideal for evening use to support sleep and parasympathetic recovery. Magnesium malate supports energy production and muscle function, making it a strong choice for morning or pre-training supplementation. Some common dosages are 300-400mg of magnesium glycinate in the evening for sleep and recovery and 200-300mg of magnesium malate earlier in the day for energy metabolism.

Omega-3 fish oil

Of all 4 supplements we are discussing, **omega-3 fish oil** is the most common. If fish burps are the worst side effect, the proposed benefits far outweigh that minor problem. A recent study utilized fish oil supplementation and resistance trained individuals. The participants were divided into two groups: a group taking 4.5 grams per day of fish oil and a placebo group taking 4.5 grams per day of safflower oil.

Both groups used the same 3 times per week lifting program for 10 weeks. They followed their usual diets but were asked to eat at least 1 gram of protein per kilogram of body weight daily. The researchers measured body composition with a DEXA scan and everyone's omega 3 index score. Well, get to the good stuff Colin, what were the results? Lean Body Mass: The fish oil users gained an average of 4 pounds. The placebo group gained 3 pounds. Fat Mass: The fish oil group lost 2 pounds. The placebo group lost 0 pounds. Body Fat Percentage: The fish oil group lost 1.4%. The placebo group lost 0.6%.

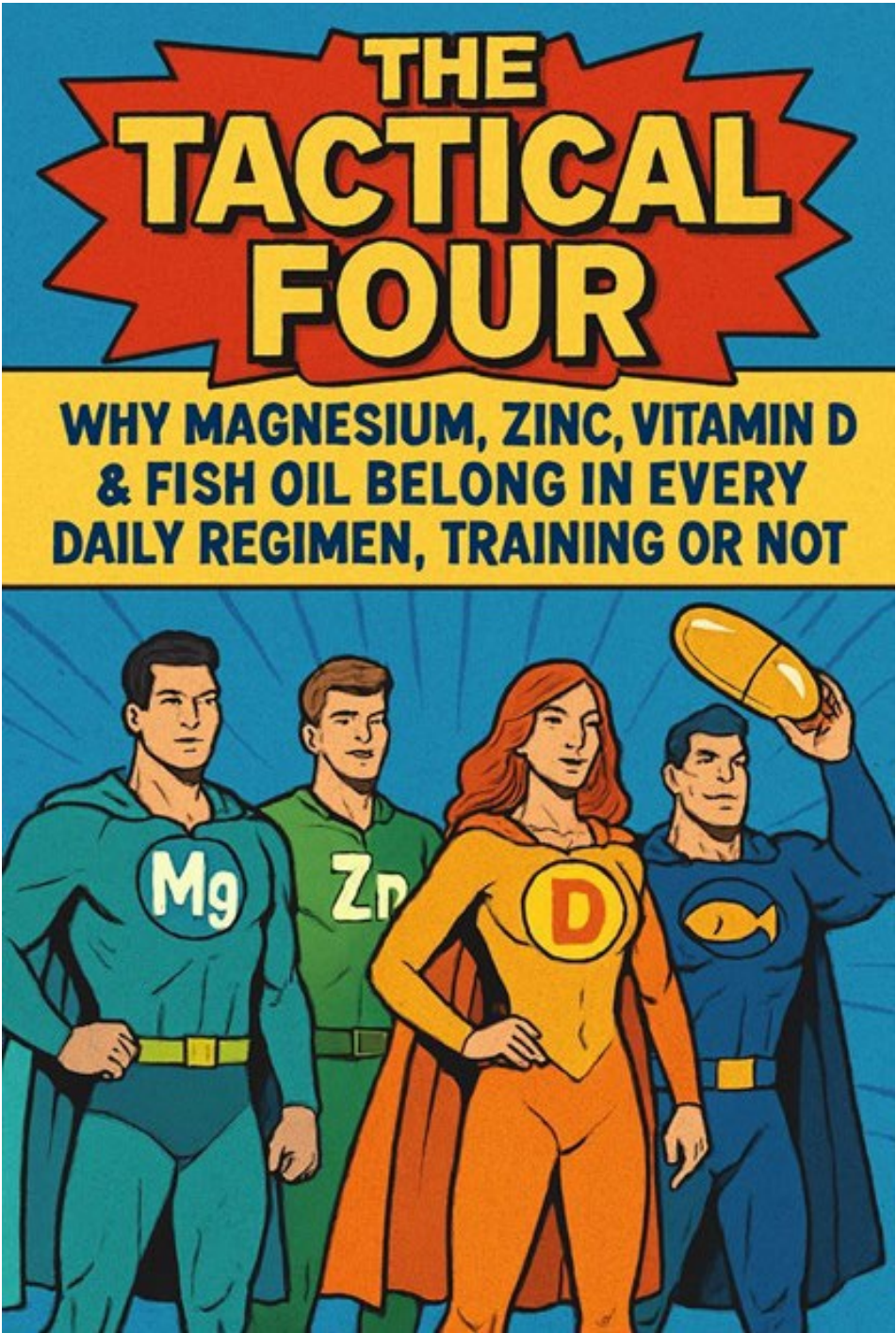
Both groups did the same workouts and ate the same foods as before the study, but the fish oil group gained 1 extra pound of lean body mass while losing 2 pounds of fat compared to those who didn't take fish oil. DHA and EPA fish oil supplementation supports cardiovascular health, cognitive function, and inflammation regulation, with optimal benefits seen at daily intakes of 250–1,000 mg combined. DHA stands for docosahexaenoic acid, an omega-3 fatty acid primarily found in fish oil that plays a critical role in brain development, eye health, and cellular signaling. EPA stands for eicosapentaenoic acid, an omega-3 fatty acid found in fish oil that supports anti-inflammatory processes, cardiovascular health, and mood regulation.

Zinc

Zinc is up next and is crucial for many functions in the body. While zinc and magnesium deficiencies do see some overlap, such as immune dysfunction, muscle fatigue & weakness, and cognitive issues, zinc is essential for immune defense, wound healing, and protein synthesis. It is easily lost from the body following strenuous exercise, especially in hot and humid environments. Deficiency shows up in skin issues, poor healing, sensory changes (taste/smell), and sexual dysfunction. Also, like magnesium, make sure the form of zinc is chelated. Chelation is the process by which a molecule binds to a mineral or metal ion to form a stable complex, enhancing its bioavailability by improving absorption and reducing reactivity in the digestive tract.

Vitamin D

The final supplement we will touch on is **vitamin D**. Whether it be synthesized from getting outside and getting sunlight or in supplement form, this is a supplement you should add to your stack. Research shows that about 10 minutes of mid-day sun with 25% of the body exposed, such as the arms and legs, can meet daily vitamin D needs during spring and summer. Colin...the heat index reaches 105 degrees; I will be taking a vitamin D supplement instead. Some benefits of vitamin D include, supporting bone health, boosting the immune system, muscle function, and mood regulation. Dosage for adults’ range between 600-800 International Units (IU).



Colin’s take on these supplements: I personally take all of them daily (plus an allergy pill!) and have noticed surprisingly positive effects, especially in terms of mental clarity and mood regulation. Whether it’s placebo or a genuine chemical response, the most noticeable change has been the disappearance of that heavy, lingering sense of doom I used to feel upon waking. Small stressors that once stuck with me now seem to roll off my shoulders and fade from my mind. Until now, I’ve opted for a combined zinc/magnesium supplement (ZMA) for convenience, rather than using chelated forms. But after researching and writing this article, I’ll be switching to chelated versions to potentially improve absorption. As always, do your own research, consult a physician, decide what’s right for your body and goals, and let us know if you add any of these to your supplement stash.

Picture Description: A colorful comic-book style graphic titled “The Tactical Four” featuring four superheroes representing key supplements: Magnesium (Mg), Zinc (Zn), Vitamin D (D), and Fish Oil (depicted with a fish symbol). The tagline reads: “Why magnesium, zinc, vitamin D & fish oil belong in every daily regimen, training or not.”

References

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