



KSC FITNESS CENTER

Latest news and bulletin updates

Tuesday,
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KSC’s Fitness and Health Education & Wellness (HEWP) Team

Colin Andryc, Wellness Specialist

Add Fitness to Your Christmas Lists

Did the Fitness Center get new equipment?
Yes! And with Christmas right around the corner, they could make your list of gift ideas!

Recently, the Fitness Center added **loop bands** and a multipack of **Chirp Wheels** to its equipment lineup. These are two essentials for any fitness enthusiast looking to add variety to foundational movements—or for the 9-to-5 office worker dealing with a stiff spine and tight hip flexors. Loop bands build on compound movements like lunges and squats, offering increased resistance while remaining beginner-friendly. Chirp Wheels, meanwhile, are a step up from traditional foam rollers, also suitable for all fitness levels.

Loop bands are closed-loop elastic bands that can be placed around the ankles, knees, or wrists to increase muscular tension during specific movements. Unlike equipment such as the Smith machine, which minimizes stabilizer muscle engagement, loop bands activate those stabilizers by resisting unwanted joint motion—like preventing knee valgus (knees caving in) during a squat. One benefit I personally noticed when using the bands was a stronger mind-muscle connection (neuromuscular engagement), thanks to the constant tension throughout the range of motion. Squats and lunges are already excellent compound movements but adding a loop band can add a unique challenge to these familiar exercises. You might go from “I’ve done this a thousand times” to “I can’t believe I hit muscular failure with just a bodyweight lunge and a loop band around my ankles!” Below are exercises you can perform with a loop band:

01 Lateral Arm Extension

Main muscles worked:
Lateral arms, Chest



PREP:
(1) Stand with your feet hip-width apart. Chest up and abs tight.
(2) Place loop bands around your wrists. Extend your arm straight in front of your body and keep arms shoulder-height and shoulder-width apart. Fists clenched.

EXERCISE:
Open your arms extending outwards and slowly go back to the original position.

02 Loop Band Lat Pull

Main muscles worked:
Lats, Shoulders



PREP:
(1) Stance. Chest up. Relax shoulders and back muscles.
(2) Place loop bands around your wrists.
(3) Position your arms straight and up towards the ceiling.

EXERCISE:
(1) Slowly pull down until bands rest on your back. Feel using your back muscles. Lift slowly until arms straight and up towards ceiling.
(2) Make it harder. Grip the band with a shorter distance between your hands while pulling down.

03 Bicep Curls

Main muscles worked:
Biceps



PREP:
(1) Sit on a chair. Keep feet hip-width apart. Place loop band behind your right knee.
(2) Grab the band with your right hand. The movement will be performed with only this arm.

EXERCISE:
Pull the band towards your shoulder, keeping your elbow tight to your body. And slowly go back down to the starting position. Alternate arms to equally exercise both arms.

04 Loop Band Shoulder Tri-Set

Main muscles worked:
Shoulders, Chest, Upper Back, Triceps



PREP:
(1) Stance. Chest up and feet hip-width apart.
(2) Place loop bands around your wrists. Position your forearms straight in front of your body.

EXERCISE:
(1) Extend forearms outwards with the strength of your shoulders and slowly go back to the original position. Keep elbows tight to your body.
(2) Get ready to feel an intense burn as you move from one to the next with minimal rest.

05 Standing Hip Abduction

Main muscles worked:
Gluteus, Hamstrings, Inner and Outer Thighs



PREP:
(1) Place loop band around your ankles.
(2) Put right hand on the wall to help keep balance.
(3) Stand with your feet hip-width apart and keep abs tight.

EXERCISE:
(1) Stand on right leg and raise your left leg straight out to the side.
(2) Slowly return the leg. Try not to lower it all the way down. Alternate legs after repetitions for equally exercise.

06 Standing Hip Extension

Main muscles worked:
Hip, Hamstrings, Quadriceps



PREP:
(1) Place loop band around your ankles.
(2) Put your hands on the wall to help keep balance. Stand with your feet hip-width apart and keep abs tight.

EXERCISE:
(1) Stand on one leg, extend the opposite leg back from hips and slowly return it. Alternate legs after repetitions for equally exercise.

07 Seated Hip Abduction

Main muscles worked:
Inner and outer thighs



PREP:
(1) Place loop band around your knees and seat with your feet hip-width apart.
(2) Keep back straight and abs tight. Cross arms and put hand on your shoulders.

EXERCISE:
(1) Open and extend your legs outwards and slowly return to hip-width.
(2) The seated hip abduction takes the burn to your inner and outer thighs. It's an easy exercise to do anywhere you have access to a chair or bench.

08 Loop Band Side Lunges

Main muscles worked:
Gluteus, hamstrings, quadriceps, inner and outer thighs



PREP:
(1) Place loop band around your ankles. Stand with your feet hip-width apart. chest up, abs tight.
(2) Mini band side lunges give you all the side-lunge benefits of inner and outer thigh sculpting.

EXERCISE:
(1) Hands under your chin. Move a large step to the right and squat. Put body weight on your right leg.
(2) Chest up. Fully extend your left leg and return to stance. Alternate legs after repetitions for equally exercise.

09 Flutter Kicks

Main muscles worked:
Core



PREP:
(1) Place loop band around your lower legs and lay flat on your back.
(2) Rest your arms next to your body, palms facing down, and fully extend your legs.

EXERCISE:
(1) Lift your legs off of the ground around 5 inches. Raise your right leg higher than the left one, and in sequence lower the right leg and raise the left leg.
(2) Going back and forth, always keeping your legs extended, repeat this sequence 8 to 12 times, according to your level.

10 Loop Band Bicycle

Main muscles worked:
Core



PREP:
(1) Place loop band around your feet. Lay flat on your back. Hands on your head. Keep your feet hip-width apart.
(2) Three 90 degrees. Upper body and thighs; thighs and lower legs; lower legs and feet.

EXERCISE:
(1) Curl body, raise your left leg to touch your right elbow, and at the same time extend your right knee out. Slowly return and switch legs.
(2) The farther you extend your knees out while doing this movement, the harder it will be.

11 Plank with Loop Band Knee Drive

Main muscles worked:
Core



PREP:
(1) Plank position. Face down with both hands shoulder-width apart supporting your body.
(2) Place loop band around your lower legs. Raise and keep your right leg horizontally.

EXERCISE:
(1) Raise right leg towards your chest, keep left leg straight. And then slowly return it. Switch legs and raise legs in sequence.
(2) Planks are one of the ultimate exercises for building a solid core due to their ability to engage nearly every muscle of the abdominals and lower back.

12 Banded Plank Kickbacks

Main muscles worked:
Core, gluteus



PREP:
(1) Plank position. Face down with both hands shoulder-width apart supporting your body.
(2) Place loop band around your lower legs. Raise and keep your right leg horizontally.

EXERCISE:
(1) Kick your right leg back from your hip for 5-6 inches and quickly return it. Switch legs to equally exercise your core and legs.
(2) You'll hold a plank while doing kickbacks. This will isometrically tone your abdominals and build stability while the kickbacks sculpt your bum. Be sure to keep your abs braced.

Ever feel like your basic foam roller just isn’t cutting it anymore—especially when it comes to working the thoracic spine and hip flexors? Not to diminish the benefits of a traditional foam roller, but sometimes you need a more specialized tool to get the job done. That’s where the Chirp Wheel comes in.

The Chirp Wheel is essentially a roller with a much smaller surface area, designed to dig deep into muscle knots in the shoulders, spine, and neck. It features a rigid plastic core wrapped in cushy foam. According to the Chirp Wheel website, this combination and circular design “puts pressure on the muscles

surrounding the spine. In doing so, the muscles are stretched and strengthened.” The wheel comes in four different sizes, each tailored to relieve varying levels of tension. It fits snugly between your shoulder blades and rolls easily down your spine, delivering a strain-reducing massage. Whether you’re recovering from a tough workout or hours hunched over a desk, the Chirp Wheel helps loosen knots and restore the natural curvature of your spine—resulting in improved posture, balance, and flexibility. The smaller sizes can even be used while seated at your desk, as pictured below, which I currently have in place as I type this article!

Personally, I find the two largest wheels especially effective for stretching the hip flexors—particularly when alternating legs. They’re also great for facilitating lumbar and thoracic extension by keeping the glutes grounded and gently arching backward over the wheel.

chirp.

12" GENTLE
Delivers a wonderful stretch and light massage spine



10" FIRM
Targeted pressure for muscle recovery and pain relief



6" DEEP TISSUE
Deep pressure digs into your toughest knots



4" FOCUS
Targets key pressure points to relieve tension and pain



The next size down is ideal for rolling the entire spine, while the smallest wheel is perfect for relieving neck tension by simply resting your neck on it.

I’ll admit, the larger wheels were a bit intimidating at first. With nearly a foot in diameter—compared to the 4–6 inches of a standard foam roller—they felt unstable initially, and dismounting gracefully took some practice. But after a few uses, they felt much more secure. The Chirp Wheel’s tough plastic core wrapped in a thin foam ring delivers far more targeted pressure than a foam roller made entirely of foam.

All in all, both the Chirp Wheel and loop bands can elevate your routine and help you take that next step. There’s nothing wrong with sticking to a standard foam roller or traditional lower-body work—but maybe the missing ingredient is one of these new tools. Stop by the Fitness Center and let us know what you think!

References:
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Work Has Given Me Tech Neck. This Device Is Helping Undo the Damage | WIRED
Effects of elastic band resistance training on the physical and mental health of elderly individuals: A mixed methods systematic review - PMC

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



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

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.

During Fitness Center closure due to the Government Shutdown, only virtual Monday-Friday classes are available on MS Teams:

- [Click Here](#) to participate in Buffed & Balanced and Stretch class through MS Teams.
- [Click Here](#) for previously recorded classes.
- [Click Here](#) to request the outlook calendar series.

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

Holiday Hours



The KSC Fitness Center will be closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year’s Day. Please keep an eye on the Daily News, email updates and Fitness Center check-in announcements for adjustments to the Fitness Center hours during the weeks of these federal holidays.

Picture Description: A red and white stocking sets in the snow with nuts inside and on the ground around it, in addition to an apple.

Brittany Freeman, Wellness Coordinator

Diabetes Awareness



Picture Description: Rows of Kettlebells with a Santa hat on the one closest.

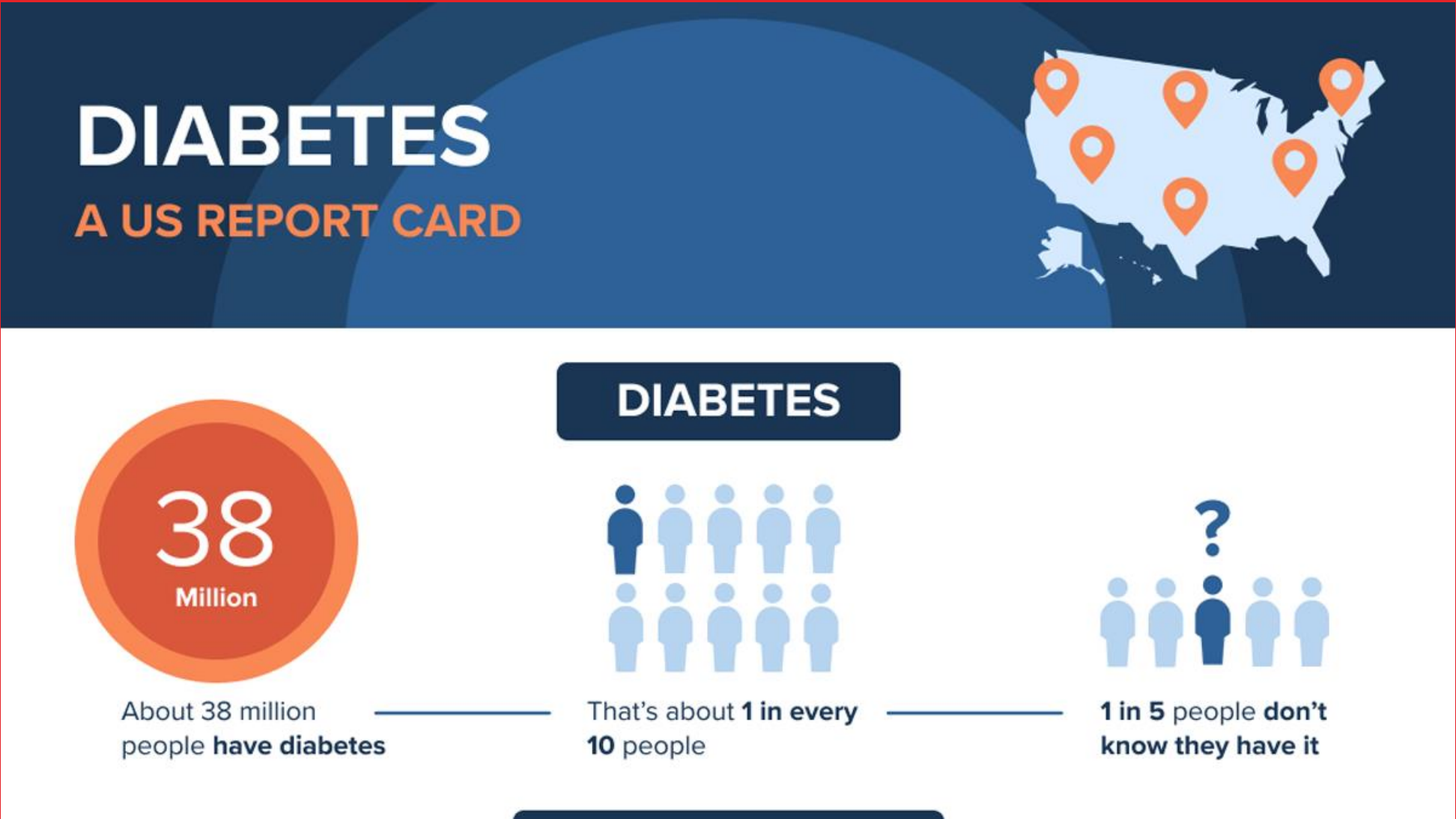
your life is not about you may be an interesting concept to grasp for many, but it can really brighten the celebrations many are preparing for this time of year. Joy can be found in that purpose or knowledge of something greater than self. Many of us can probably think of someone in our life who demonstrated this joy. I often reminisce memories of my grandmother, as one who demonstrated joy so well. She loved Christmas, basically celebrating it all year long and explained the difference between happiness and joy, as happiness depends on feelings, but joy originates from an understanding that remains despite our feelings (happy, sad, lonely, stressed, depressed, etc). Joy is rooted in the knowledge of a purpose that is greater than self. Like everyone, my grandmother lived with many uncontrollable challenges, including Type I diabetes, and November happens to be National Diabetes Month. So, while I dive into information on diabetes, a disease affecting so many today, I hope we can focus on joy that prevails despite its’ ominous presence in our lives and the lives of those we adore. All types of diabetes develop due to lack of insulin or insulin resistance. Insulin resistance can be detected with a fasting blood glucose test or A1C blood test. A fasting blood glucose test measures one’s blood glucose at that time of testing and an A1C blood test measures one’s average blood glucose from the past two to three months (Association, n.d.). High blood glucose and A1C levels indicate insulin resistance. Insulin is a hormone our bodies naturally produce from the pancreas, when healthy. This hormone is released from the pancreas when the body’s glucose increases and functions like a key to unlock cells, enabling glucose to move into them for energy. Among those with Type I Diabetes, the body does not produce insulin, so it must be administered/taken with the consumption of glucose. For those with Type II Diabetes, the body stops responding to insulin, and this is called insulin resistance. With both types of diabetes, the body is at risk for accumulating too much blood glucose, or already has, resulting in life-threatening side effects. As mentioned, diabetes is a life-threatening illness that should be taken seriously, and if possible, prevention is best. Knowing the risk factors, symptoms and warning signs is an initial step in prevention. Review the following to become familiar with the risk factors, symptoms and warning signs of diabetes ((NIDDK), 2024):

Obtain a Health Weight	Genetic Factors	Know Your ABCs	Lifestyle Habits:	Mental & Emotional Health
•People who are overweight or obese and those who are 35 years old or older are at higher risk for developing Type II Diabetes.	•People who have family members with diabetes are at higher risk. Type II Diabetes is also diagnosed in higher rates among African Americans, American Indians, Hispanic/Latino and Pacific Islanders.	- Check with your healthcare providers to ensure the following are kept in healthy ranges. Risk of Type II diabetes increases when these are not in a healthy range: •A = A1C: the blood test measuring average blood glucose over the past three months •B = Blood pressure •C = Cholesterol	•Physical inactivity, smoking and an unhealthy diet, including alcohol consumption, can increase risk for diabetes. Indicators that lifestyle habits may be out of whack include being overweight/obese or experiencing ABCs that are out of range. In addition to being physically active, abstaining from tobacco and consuming alcohol moderately, or not at all, and getting sufficient sleep enable better hormone regulation and the ability to achieve and maintain a healthy lifestyle.	•Figure out how to keep stress levels down by paying attention to negative feelings and exploring ways to avoid them. Unhealthy lifestyle habits contribute to stress, mental instability and negative emotions, so physical activity and sufficient sleep, can ward off fatigue and hormone irregularities that may disturb mental and emotional well-being. Additionally, social well-being and seeking support (KSC’s Employee Assistance Program, social activities, participating in fitness classes, etc.) can be beneficial to improve mental and emotional wellness.

Insulin stimulates lipogenesis, a process in which fats (fatty acids and triglycerides) are derived from non-fat sources, like carbohydrates, when the body has excess energy. Excess energy sources are converted to triglycerides for storage in adipose/fat tissue and the liver (Vargas, Joy, & Sepulveda, 2022). Ideally, to prevent excessive need for insulin and fat storage, we need to avoid consuming more than our bodies need. Not consuming more than our bodies need is easier said than done, right? We are all unique with different variables to consider in developing or maintaining healthy eating habits, that decrease diabetes risk factors or symptoms. So, let us explore why we may eat more than our bodies need (Clinic, 2023).

- 1. **Emotions:** Boredom, fatigue, sadness and stress can all encourage us to eat more than we need. Endorphins are hormones released by the brain while eating, and they increase pleasure, hence the desire to eat. If you get bored sitting still for long periods of time (required for a growing number of jobs today!), snacking becomes tempting! This is why small breaks are encouraged for enhanced productivity (check out our [Balance Zones](#) or ask us for quick office/chair exercises/stretches).
- 2. **Processed Foods:** Processed foods include a hefty range of food preparation from cutting an apple into slices to using it to make apple sauce. In general, the more a food is processed, the more it becomes easier and tempting to eat, due to the ease more calories of it can be eaten and the chances more ingredients were added, like salt, sugar and many more that are often formulated to encourage eating more!
- 3. **Time of the Day:** Try to develop healthy habits, while keeping in mind our natural circadian rhythm and times of the day fatigue is experienced most. It is normal to feel tired in the evenings, often encouraging that urge to eat more, especially if it becomes habitual (example: to eat while watching TV), so practicing a relaxing routine that does not encourage eating before bed, may be very beneficial.
- 4. **Social Influences:** This requires little to no explanation, as Thanksgiving and Christmas approach, and many of us look forward to our favorite traditional foods! Good food is used to celebrate, which is a great, encouraging food quality, a reason to save some foods for special occasions, fellowship, and the chance to savor what we eat instead of mindless eating. When celebrations occur often, affecting our ability to stay healthy, we just need to adapt. For example, sip on a non-caloric, unsweetened beverage, like a cup of hot tea, black coffee or soda water during social events to reduce the amount of snacking.
- 5. **Large Portion Sizes:** Again, no explanation is required for this one! Simply using smaller plates and bowls, splitting dishes at restaurants (or, ordering half To Go) and eating slower are all ways to decrease portion sizes. Additionally, I recommend loading up on fiber first! Before meals, eat about a cup, or more, of vegetables first. Not only does the fiber increase fullness, but it can also coat the lining of our digestive tracts, improving digestion and maybe improving our insulin sensitivity (Mao, Huang, Zhu, Wei, & Chen, 2021)!

Hopefully, this article provides some applicable information to prevent or manage diabetes. A healthy lifestyle involves a lot, but do not let that be discouraging. Instead, be encouraged that achieving success in one component of wellness can help you achieve success in other components. Although diet and exercise can be extremely beneficial, they are only pieces of the big puzzle of wellness. Start by succeeding in those pieces that come easiest for you, knowing success in that area can provide the motivation for success in other areas. And remember, discovering a reason greater than yourself to live a healthy lifestyle is our greatest chance of success, most likely to endure!



https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/images/library/socialmedia/diabetesintheus_print.pdf

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Kristopher Schweitzer, Wellness Specialist

Movember & Understanding Prostate Cancer



What is Movember?

- It is an annual event, traditionally held in November, that aims to “change the face of men's health.”
- It is a portmanteau of the Australian-English diminutive word for moustache, “mo”, and “November.”
- The movement uses a moustache as a driving symbol to bring attention to serious men's health issues.

What does Movember focus on?

- **Prostate cancer:** Raising awareness and funds for prevention and early detection.
- **Testicular cancer:** Promoting awareness and supporting men with the disease.
- **Mental health and suicide prevention:** Sparking important conversations to break the stigma around men's mental health struggles.

How to participate...

- **Grow a moustache:** Grow a moustache for 30 days, starting with a clean shave on November 1st.
- **Move for Movember:** Commit to moving 60 miles in the month of November.
- **Host an event:** Bring friends and colleagues together to raise funds and awareness.
- **Donate:** Make a donation to support the Movember Foundation's initiatives.

The Movember Foundation

- The Movember Foundation is the global organization behind the movement.
- It works to improve the lives of men and boys worldwide by funding projects and challenging how men think about their health.
- Since inception, the Movember Foundation has raised \$837 million and funded over 1,200 projects in more than 20 countries.

Male Suicide			Prostate Cancer		
In 2023, suicide was the second most common cause of death for men ages 25-34	Rate has increased significantly over the last two decades	In 2023, the male suicide rate was nearly four times higher than that of females	Most common cancer in men worldwide, excluding skin cancer	Second leading cause of cancer death in American men, behind only lung cancer	Highest in men aged 65 and older

One of the more serious men’s health issues that the [Movember Movement](#) strives to raise awareness to is prostate cancer.

What is Prostate Cancer?

- An abnormal growth of cells that starts in the prostate, the small gland that is part of the male reproductive system.
- If the cancer spreads beyond the prostate, it is known as metastatic or Stage 4 prostate cancer.

What causes Prostate Cancer?

The exact cause of prostate cancer often is not known but some risk factors include:

- Older age (more common after age 50 and most common after age 65)
- Race and ethnicity (in the United States, black people are at a greater risk)
- Family history of the disease (blood relative)
- Obesity
- Smoking tobacco

What are the symptoms of Prostate Cancer?

- Blood in urine
- Blood in semen
- Frequent urination (especially at night)
- Difficulty urinating (weak flow or flow that starts and stops)
- Pain or burning during urination

If the cancer spreads beyond the prostate, other symptoms may include:

- Urinary incontinence (leaking)
- Back pain
- Bone pain
- Erectile dysfunction
- Fatigue
- Weight loss
- Weakness in arms or legs

How can Prostate Cancer be prevented?

There is no sure way to prevent prostate cancer, but you can help reduce your risk by:

- Eating a healthy diet
 - Variety of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains
 - Limit animal fats
 - Tomatoes, broccoli, cauliflower, and soy have been linked to a lower risk of prostate cancer
- Exercising most days of the week
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Not smoking
- Limiting alcohol consumption
- Consulting a healthcare professional for advice on possible medicinal treatment



Prostate cancer is usually slow to grow in the early stages and most people experience few to no symptoms. The key to improving its prognosis, like other cancers, is early detection and treatment. It is recommended that men start the screening process for prostate cancer by age 55, or earlier if they are at a higher risk. People diagnosed in the early stages of the disease often have many treatment options to consider, including active surveillance, radiation therapy, and surgery. Early diagnosis improves the chances of long-term survival. 99% of patients diagnosed with early-stage prostate cancer live at least five years after diagnosis whereas only 32% of those with metastatic prostate cancer share the same outlook.

References:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/prostate-cancer/symptoms-causes/syc-20353087>

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/8634-prostate-cancer>

Advent Calendar Challenge

Mark your calendars! The KSC Fitness Center staff would like to invite you to participate in our upcoming Advent Calendar Fitness & Wellness Challenge. Our challenge will follow mimic the tradition of the advent calendar, beginning on Monday, December 1st, and culminating on Christmas Day. Our challenge is an individual, self-monitored challenge, personally designed to help keep us on a healthy course through the holidays.

The way our challenge works...

On December 1st, we will open door #25 on our advent calendar to reveal a daily challenge.

On December 2nd, we will open door #24, and so on, until door #1 is opened on Christmas Day.

Each door opened will reveal **TWO** different challenges for that day.

The **TWO** daily challenges, designed by one of our Fitness Center’s staff, will include any combination of a physical fitness-focused challenge and/or a health and wellness-focused challenge.



Picture Description: Santa and his sleigh, filled with presents, over the clouds against a black background with the Earth and moon above.

The dual daily challenge will reflect the **# on that day’s advent calendar door**, in some manner. (For example... December 21st/Door #5 = 5 mile bike ride & 5 servings of fruits/vegetables)

To receive credit for that day’s challenge, **BOTH** challenges must be achieved.

Participants will keep track of their own progress (following the honor system), and we will reward the challenge’s top finishers at the end.

Join us for Challenge Q&A Sessions on MS Teams:

- Wednesday, November 12th at 10:30 am [on Teams](#)
- Thursday, November 20th at 12:30 pm [on Teams](#)

Benjamin Youmans, Fitness Specialist

Breathwork & Mindfulness for Stress Relief

While the Holiday season can bring joy and celebration, it can also be a season of stress and full schedules. Stress is a fact of life, but it doesn’t have to be debilitating if we have the tools to control it, and even harness it for positive outcomes. One tool you will always have access to is your breathing, and later, the practice of Mindfulness.

To put it simply, “Breathwork” is just a fancy word for utilizing one of many deliberate breathing techniques to regulate psychological and physiological arousal. Most of the time our breathing is controlled by the autonomic nervous system (ANS), a process which is subconscious and automatic. When we choose to breathe consciously, we can harness the ANS to relax the body and the mind.

Here are two simple but effective Breathwork exercises to try:

1. **Box Breathing** – Helpful in stressful situations to slow the breath and ease a racing mind.
 - Inhale for four seconds
 - Hold for four seconds
 - Exhale for four seconds
 - Hold for four seconds
 - Repeat as desired
2. **5-Finger Breathing** – A tactile guide to timing inhales and exhales
 - Lift up one hand and trace an outline with the index finger of your opposite hand, tracing up and down the length of the fingers
 - As you trace up one finger, inhale. Use the cue, “Smell a flower.”
 - As you trace down the same finger, exhale. Use the cue, “Blow out a candle.”
 - Repeat for all five fingers. Take of note of any differences in mindset or physiological response.



Picture Description: A computer generated-looking, white cartoon figure lunging while curling a dumbbell and wearing a Santa hat. The other dumbbell remains on the floor.

As you can see, Breathwork does not have to be complicated or time-consuming to be effective. A natural evolution from Breathwork is Mindfulness, being present in the body and experiencing a multitude of sensations without distraction. These two practices go hand-in-hand and we rarely do one without the other.

Being present and “mindful” in the moment can help you become more aware of your present experiences as well as helping to shift attention away from cognitive activity such as overthinking, worrying, etc. The calming effect can also extend to the body by lowering heart rate and easing physical tension.

Let’s try a Mindfulness exercise:

- Set a timer and put any device that has the potential to distract aside for the duration of the timer.
- Sit, stand, or kneel in a relaxing environment. (This will look different for different people. It could be a quiet, dark room, a nature trail, a park, or anywhere you can relax)
- For the duration of your set time, close your eyes and let your other senses take over
 - How does the experience of breathing feel?
 - How does the air feel coming in and going out?
 - How does the ground feel under your feet, or the seat you’re sitting on?
 - What can you hear?
 - What can you smell?
 - Check in with your body, do you feel any tight muscles or painful joints?
 - Can you feel a breeze, or an A/C vent, or the sun?
- Bask in these sensations until the timer ends your session.
- Take a mental note of how you feel after the exercise (Do you feel more relaxed or maybe more “in” your body?).

By implementing these practices, especially Mindfulness, we can regain the ability to experience the world around us for everything it offers. In this era of constant interconnectedness and stimulation, sometimes being bored and present, being bored, and focusing on nothing but the breath can be exactly what we need.

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