



The Value of Laughter

By: Crystal Wright, Health Educator

Smiling is good for the heart, and laughter is good for the soul!



A good sense of humour can't cure all ailments, but data is accumulating about how laughter can benefit our health. Giving someone a smile, or enjoying a little laughter helps to lighten one's mood, but there are also physical changes that occur in the body. Uninhibited smiles and a good laugh have the ability to provide both short term and long term effects.

Short Term Effects:

1. **Stimulates many organs.** Laughter enhances your intake of oxygen-rich air, stimulates your heart, lungs and muscles, and increases the endorphins that are released by your brain.
2. **Activates and relieves your stress response.** A rollicking laugh fires up and then cools down your stress response, and it can increase and then decrease your heart rate and blood pressure. The result? A good, relaxed feeling.
3. **Soothes tension.** Laughter can also simulate circulation and aid muscle relaxation, both of which can help reduce some of the physical symptoms of stress.

Long Term Effects:

1. **Improves your immune function.** Positive thoughts can actually release neuropeptides that support immune function.
2. **Relieves pain.** Laughter may ease pain by helping the body to produce its own natural painkillers.

(Continued on page 2)

What's Inside?

2 Ditching
Hydration

3 Safe Moves - To
Save Your Back

4 Aging
Gracefully

5 Forever...in
motion Leaders

The Value of Laughter Continued

3. **Improves overall personal satisfaction.** Laughter and smiles can make it easier to cope with difficult situations. They help you connect with other people, improve your self-esteem, and give you a happier, brighter outlook on life.

Children often laugh at things many times a day, perhaps as they find wonder and awe in the things around them. This is your reminder to invite smiles and laughter into your life. Find wonder and awe, even in the moments that we've taken for granted. Give a stranger a smile, laugh with a friend, and find the amazing in the everyday. Allow this joy to come from the core of our being, and feel the positive benefits ripple throughout the body!

Ditching Dehydration

By Karissa Weber, Dietitian



Older adults are at a higher risk of becoming dehydrated as our sense of thirst decreases as we age. Dehydration can increase the risk of falling as it causes dizziness and confusion, leading to a loss of balance. Staying hydrated becomes even more important during the summer when it is hot and your body is losing even more water. Fluid can include water, milk, juice, soup, coffee/tea and even food such as fruits and vegetables!

Tips for staying hydrated:

- Start and end your day with a glass of water
- Have a drink with each meal/snack
- Keep fluids visible and close at hand
- Drink even more if you are sweating throughout the day
- Flavour your water if you are not a fan of plain water - some ideas are lemon/orange/lime wedges, mint, cucumbers and frozen berries
- Water is the best option for staying hydrated but all fluids help!

Signs and symptoms of dehydration:

- * Thirst
- * Dark urine, decreased urination
- * Loss of appetite, weight loss
- * Difficulty swallowing
- * Constipation
- * Dry mouth, lips, skin
- * Headache, dizziness, nausea, confusion
- * Fatigue or weakness
- * Dry or sunken eyes
- * Restlessness and sleeplessness
- * Cramping, weak, rapid pulse
- * Low blood pressure
- * Skin breakdown
- * Poor wound healing

Safe Moves - To Save Your Back

By Kereen Lazurko, Recreation Therapist

Back pain is one of the most common health complaints around the world - and you don't have to be an older adult to experience it, but it helps. There are certain things we do in our every-day lives that cause us to unknowingly increase our risk for back injury. Following are a few examples of some things we can do to help reduce the risk:

- **Maintain good posture** - Poor posture and body mechanics (which could include awkward bending, twisting or reaching) puts excess pressure on the discs resulting in extra stress and strain on muscles, ligaments, nerves, blood vessels and back joints.
- **Reduce repetitive tasks** - Frequently repeating certain movements can cause injuries. Muscles and tendons can become strained and fatigued if not given an adequate length of time to recover. This could cause injuries like rotator cuff, carpal tunnel syndrome, tennis elbow, etc.
- **Lift properly** - Keep the load in close and use those strong leg muscles to do the lift NOT your back! Also, engage your core and avoid twisting.
- **Avoid sitting for extended periods of time** - Changing positions and moving around frequently as well as giving yourself a good stretch every so often can help to avoid tight muscles, relieve tension and prevent injuries.
- **Maintain a healthy lifestyle** - This includes, but is not limited to, things such as maintaining a well-balanced and healthy diet/staying well-hydrated, reducing stress, getting sufficient sleep and being physically active on a regular basis.

It's impossible to remove all potential risks of injury to our backs. However, being more aware of what the risks are and at least reducing risk wherever we can, may go a long way to saving our backs!





Aging Gracefully - Does Exercise Really Build Bone Mass and Bone Strength?

By Cheryl Lehne, Senior Physical Therapist

The answer to the question is “yes” and the old adage rings true: “Use it or lose it”. Research confirms that older adults who are active stimulate bone mass development while the inactive person will lose bone mass over time. Specific exercises include weight bearing, i.e. walking programs, and strength building, i.e. against gravity, using weights or resistance bands.

It is important to remember that walking helps to maintain and build bone in the lower parts of our body as the impact of stepping is absorbed through our feet, ankles, knees, and hips. However, walking does not increase bone mass in our spine or arms. Therefore, it is recommended that strength exercises for the arms and the spine are included in bone mass building.

To increase upper extremity bone mass and strength, consider doing some arm exercises with weights or resistance bands. Another really great way to incorporate more resistance and activation for the arms and spinal muscles is with the use of walking poles. In using the poles you are ensuring a more upright posture and proper walking pattern, which may allow a person to do a more brisk walk (which also improves bone mineral density); and it requires the use of the muscles of the arms by pushing through the poles, so you have the added benefit to building bone mass in the arms.

So...bone density can be different in different parts of the body. We could have good bone strength in our legs but not in our arms if all we do is walk; if we were to fall on an outstretched arm we may break a wrist or shoulder. The effect of exercises on bone health is specific to the area stressed by the exercise. Therefore, we need to exercise all parts of our bodies so it improves all of our bones and muscles.

Staying on Your Feet strives to reduce the risk of falling and the severity of injuries for seniors. It works in conjunction with **Forever...in motion** to offer a falls reduction, injury prevention, balance and education to the Saskatoon City and surrounding area.

If you would like more information about the Staying on Your Feet program, contact:

Cheryl Lehne, Community Physical Therapist
Community Fall Prevention and Balance Education
cheryl.lehne@saskhealthauthority.ca
Phone: 306-655-3418





Forever...in *motion* Leaders!



Luther Leader Training



**Villa Royale Condensed
Leader Training**



Scott Forget Leader Training



Regina Leader Training

SPRA Forever...in *motion* Grant

SPRA's FIM Grant will be launching September 15th. A detailed grant brochure and link to the Grant Application portal will be posted here: <https://www.spra.sk.ca/funding/our-grants/>. Communities with Active SPRA Membership will be eligible to apply for up to \$2,000 in support of a new or existing program. Eligible expenses include for training, purchasing equipment, renting facilities and more.

Resources and Events to be Aware of ...



Forever...in motion Leader Training

Saskatoon & Area:

- **Saskatoon** - October 16, 19, 23, 26, 30, 2023 - Sierras of Erindale
- **Rural** - September 26, 28, October 3, 5, 10, 2023 - Warman Home Community Complex

Please contact Brenda at (306) 655-2454 or brenda.chomyn@saskhealthauthority.ca to register or for more information.

Regina & Area:

- TBA

Please contact Kyle Bohay at (306) 519-8876 or kyle.bohay@saskhealthauthority.ca for more information.

SPRA Virtual Training:

- October 13, 14, 20, 21. Here is the registration link: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/foreverin-motion-leader-training-registration-684943974867?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>

Please contact Kelsey at (306) 780-9219 or kmichaluk@spra.sk.ca for more information.



**North Battleford
Forever...in motion Group**

For more information on the North Battleford **Forever...in motion** group, please contact Paul Craig at paulcraig731@gmail.com

Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA), in partnership with Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association, provides **Forever...in motion** as a health promotion strategy that strives to improve the health of Older Adults living in community.

For more information about **Forever...in motion** in your region contact:

Saskatoon & area:

- Kimberly Willison (306) 844-4081 or Kimberly.willison@saskhealthauthority.ca

Regina & area:

- Kyle Bohay (306) 519-8876 or Kyle.Bohay@saskhealthauthority.ca

Regions outside Saskatoon and Regina:

- Kelsey Michaluk (306) 780-9219 or kmichaluk@spra.sk.ca



**Saskatchewan
Health Authority**



**Saskatchewan
Parks and Recreation
Association**