

Family & Consumer Focus

Winter 2008

Make 2008 the Year to MOVE!

Carol Schlitt, Extension educator, nutrition and wellness

If you vowed to make 2008 the year to improve your health, exercise is a good place to start. We all know that exercise, combined with healthy eating habits, is the best way to control weight and to help ward off illnesses such as type II diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, and stroke. Even a small amount of regular exercise like walking can benefit your health.

Before starting any exercise program, talk with your doctor—especially if you have not been active for many years, or if you are diabetic or have high blood pressure. Pick an activity that you enjoy and start slowly. Anything that gets you up and moving around on a regular basis is a good start. Here are some possibilities:

- Take a short, easy walk around the block
- Park farther away from stores when you shop and walk
- Walk up stairs
- Put on some music and dance
- Swim or join a water aerobics class
- Exercise with a friend

Health experts recommend 60 minutes of vigorous activity three to four times a week. But, if that amount of time doesn't fit your schedule, you can do shorter segments throughout the day ... maybe a 20-minute walk in the morning, another 20 minutes before eating lunch, and then 20 minutes in the evening. Also, include some strengthening and stretching activity twice a week. Start slow and easy; then, increase the time and strength. Here are some tips to get you on your way:

- Wait two hours after you eat before you work out.
- Always warm up before you start.
- Cool down after exercising with some stretching.
- Wear loose-fitting, comfortable clothes.
- Drink water before, during, and after exercise to replace the water you lose as you sweat.
- Avoid sweet drinks, coffee, tea, and soft drinks before you exercise.
- Don't over exert yourself. Call a doctor right away if you have chest pain or shortness of breath.

Regular exercise can help boost your mood, and it gives you more self-confidence. Anything that gets you moving is a start.

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Slow Cookers: The Answer to the Dinner Dilemma

Jennifer Nance, Extension educator, Family Nutrition Program

What's for dinner? That's the common question for many of us around 5 o'clock in the evening. The colder weather is an ideal time to dust off that slow cooker you have stored away.

A slow cooker is a wonderful kitchen appliance that can solve the "what's for dinner" dilemma. But, it is often one of the most underused appliances in the home.

You can put almost any food in a slow cooker, put the lid on, and voila four to seven hours later you have a perfectly cooked meal. No fuss, no mess.

Just remember one important rule about slow cookers—always start the slow cooker on High for one hour before turning to the Low or Medium setting. You have to start

it on High to make sure the proper cooking temperature is reached.

Here is an easy recipe to try.

Easy Chicken and Vegetables

1 pound uncooked chicken, you decide what pieces
 1 can condensed cream soup, such as cream of mushroom, cream of chicken—again, your choice
 Baby carrots, potatoes, broccoli, or other fresh or frozen vegetable of your choice
 Salt and pepper to taste

1. Place uncooked chicken in slow cooker.
2. Top with cream soup, salt, pepper, and your choice of fresh or frozen vegetables.
3. Cover and cook on High for 1 hour, and then turn to Low for 6 to 7 hours. Or, cook on High 5 to 6 hours or until vegetables are tender and meat is thoroughly cooked. Do NOT lift the lid! The lid needs to remain on so that the proper cooking temperature is maintained.

Couples Relationships Need Attention to Stay Strong

Milly Kaiser, Extension educator, family life

The holidays are over, and February will soon be here—the month for valentines and expressions of love. This is a good time to think about your partner. Is your relationship as good as it could be? Or, does it need a little pizzazz?

Couples have to make a conscious effort to keep their relationship strong. You don't necessarily have to make big changes. Often, it's the little things that add pizzazz. Try these ideas for putting some spark into your relationship.

- Ask about things that interest your partner and really listen, giving your undivided attention.
- Show your affection by giving an unexpected hug or by holding hands.
- Express your appreciation by doing the little things. Give your partner a call during the day and chat for just a few minutes. Or, bring home your partner's favorite ice cream from the grocery store.

- Spend quality time with each other by taking a walk or cooking dinner together. Plan a special time together—a date. Research shows that couples who do things together are more satisfied than those who do not.

Now is the time to examine your relationship. See how you can add those "little things" to show your love and appreciation. Don't take your relationship for granted. Make a conscious effort to invest time every day to make your relationship strong.

Keep Your Computer Running Smoothly

Annette Campbell, Extension educator, communications and marketing

Just like any other electronic device, a computer needs to be properly maintained to run smoothly. Granted, there are times when you'll need and want help from a professional. Viruses, trojans, and other problems often require an expert. But, you can do some basic maintenance yourself.

Complete the following three tasks twice a month to keep your computer in top form. These instructions are for Windows XP and may not apply to earlier versions of Windows or other operating systems.

Delete Prefetch Files

- Start->Search->For Files or Folders->All Files and Folders->
- Type *Prefetch* in the **File Name** search box, and then click **Search**.
- When the Prefetch folder appears, **Stop** the search.
- **Double-click** on the **Prefetch** folder to open it.
- Go to **Edit**, and click **Select All**—this will highlight all prefetch files.
- Go to **File**, click **Delete**. Or, tap the **Delete** key on your keyboard.
- **NOTE:** Only delete the files within the Prefetch folder. Do **NOT** delete the Prefetch **folder**.

Disk Cleanup

- Start->Programs->Accessories->System Tools->Disk Cleanup
- You will be prompted to select the drive you want to clean up—normally, this will be a C drive or D drive. Select the drive and then click **OK**.
- Next you will be prompted to select the files you want to delete by **clicking the box** next to each option. *Temporary internet files* and *temporary files* are two items you'll probably want to select. You may also wish to select your *recycle bin* since that's where most deleted files end up.
- After making your selections, click **OK**. You will be asked if you are sure you want to perform the action—click **Yes**.

Disk Defragmenter

- Start->Programs->Accessories->System Tools->Disk Defragmenter
- You will be prompted to select the drive you want to defrag—normally, this will be a C drive or D drive. Select a drive and then click **Defragment**.
- **Important:** As this process is running, do **NOT** move the mouse or tap the keyboard—otherwise, the entire process may start all over. Your best bet is to start the defragmentation, and then walk away from your computer until it's done.



A Cleaning Product for Your Computer

CCleaner (Crap Cleaner) is a free tool that removes unused and temporary files from your computer—which allows Windows to run faster and more efficiently, and gives you more hard disk space.

Running CCleaner replaces the tasks of “Delete Prefetch Files” and “Disk Cleanup.” After you run CCleaner, you will still need to do a Disk Defragment.

You can download the program at: www.ccleaner.com



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Now is the Time to Get Organized

Lois Smith, Extension educator, consumer and family economics

The New Year is a good time to get your financial records in order. Some papers can be safely kept at home, but others are hard to replace and should be stored in a safe deposit box.

As a general rule, the records you need often and those you may need at a future date are kept in the home. For example, your insurance policies and a copy of your will should be in the home for quick access when needed. But, these records need to be protected against possible fire or water damage. Store them in an insulated steel box or in a fire-resistant file cabinet. The box or

file drawer should lock to ensure privacy. Be sure that more than one person knows where the key is kept.

Organize other important papers such as financial records, receipts, and medical records. Inexpensive file folders can be used to organize your records. Then, store the papers in a safe place such as a file drawer in a desk or even in a cardboard box with a lid.

Some records are not used often and are hard to replace. They should be kept in a safe deposit box. These records include



military discharge papers; original copies of birth, marriage, and death certificates; adoption, divorce and child custody papers; and the deed to your house.

Make 2008 the year to get organized and stay organized!



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