



DO YOU HAVE THE WINTER BLUES?



If you experience two or more of these symptoms each year in the fall and into the spring, you may suffer from the winter blues:

- ✚ Increased lethargy
- ✚ Difficulty waking up in the mornings as the days get shorter
- ✚ Difficulty concentrating and thinking creatively in comparison to summer months
- ✚ Incorrectly blaming oneself for things that go wrong
- ✚ Difficulty performing tasks that normally seem to be easy/enjoyable
- ✚ Increased craving for carbohydrate-rich food like chocolate and sodas

The winter blues are caused primarily by unstable melatonin levels, a hormone produced during sleep, and serotonin, a neurotransmitter responsible for mood, hunger, and sleep. As the days become shorter and the hours of sunlight decrease, sufferers of the winter blues experience changes in their mood, energy level, and ability to concentrate. Although the winter blues are not as severe as long term depression, they can change the way a person thinks, reacts, and deals with everyday challenges.

Jigsaw Puzzles on the Internet

If you like puzzles and are computer savvy, try a jigsaw puzzle on line! Go to www.jigzone.com and have fun!

HOW TO OVERCOME THE WINTER BLUES

- ✚ Regular aerobic exercise produces serotonin levels which will help to improve mood, reduce stress and decrease the feeling of depression.
- ✚ Because carbohydrate rich foods increase serotonin levels, we may crave them. A good strategy for anyone with winter blues would be to eat larger portions of complex carbohydrates, like pasta and rice, and healthy simple carbohydrates like fruits and fruit juices during meals. Stay away from unhealthy snacks that will cause momentary relief, but ultimately decrease energy.
- ✚ Try to limit sleep to 8-hour periods on a regular schedule. Oversleeping and fluctuation in the sleep/wake schedule causes increased levels of melatonin during sleep, which can contribute to feelings of depression.

It's That Time of Year!! Fitness Assessments

Monday & Tuesday, January 18 & 19
Sign-ups at the Reception Desk in the Wellness Center beginning January 4th.

Purpose in Life = Happiness

Money and happiness are what we hear about, but living with purpose might be the best for happiness – and health! Researchers have discovered individuals who feel a purpose, or meaningfulness, in their lives report less pain and reduced anxiety. Studies also show purpose in life can significantly reduce stress and can decrease depression.

The following will help you live with purpose:

- ✿ Reflection: At the end of the day, review which activities have been “life-giving” and which are “life-draining”.
- ✿ Meditation: Meditation can revive you while providing some peace and quiet.
- ✿ Journaling: Write about life experiences as a method of determining which ones enrich your life and which ones you could do without.

- ✿ Prayer: Studies at the University of Minnesota show that regular prayer can help you reach clear headedness more frequently and reliably.

A University of Missouri study found that the life purpose of believing in God and participating in spiritual practice helped African-American women to better confront and overcome a breast cancer diagnosis. In addition, scientists found that spirituality leads to better informed patients.

Best of all, living with purpose gives you a recurring goal which leads to feeling less anxious about your direction in life. The underlying calm about your life can lead to improved health. And typically leads to being more organized!

Try this strategy from a leading researcher in the field. Keep it positive. It takes five positive interactions to counter each negative one in an important relationship.

Why Have a Fitness Assessment?

- The assessment shows maintenance, progress or decline of fitness levels
- The assessment allows staff to tailor exercise to each individual
- The assessment shows effectiveness of exercise programming

If you haven't had an assessment in the last 3 months, please sign up beginning January 4th. If you are unsure if you need one, please contact us.

Movement Into Relaxation

Evaluations of this class were positive. However, Martin Hyman, the instructor, has returned to work full-time and can no longer teach at this time. The Wellness Department will continue to search for an instructor to accommodate those interested in this type of class.

Equipment Note

If you experience a problem with any equipment in the cardio and strength area, including the TVs and remotes, please let the Wellness Staff know right away so that we may fix it. If we are not present, please leave us a message.

Thank you!



Pain Management for Arthritis

Presented by Dr. Dean Mariano
Mid-State Medical Center
Friday, January 22, 2010
2:30pm
Christ Chapel
Learn about successful strategies to manage your arthritis pain.