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Healthyroads® Newsletter

Welcome to Healthyroads!

In this monthly newsletter, you'll find a collection of articles on popular health and wellness topics. If you'd like additional guidance and support in your quest to lose weight, improve nutrition, develop an exercise plan, reduce stress, or quit smoking and haven't discovered our Weight Management, Tobacco Cessation, and Wellness programs, we encourage you to call us today. **Some or all of these programs may have been purchased for you by your employer.** To take advantage of all that Healthyroads has to offer, call us toll-free at **877.330.2746** or visit us online at www.healthyroads.com.

Member Testimonial

“Had It Not Been for Healthyroads...I Would Still Be a Smoker”

As a smoker for more than 40 years, Tom had tried to quit more times than he could remember. But his addiction to nicotine was strong. And his brain was racked by constant worry. He kept thinking about how many cigarettes he had with him, when he could buy more, or where he last placed his lighter. And on top of that, he says that “knowing the health risks of smoking was causing a great deal of stress” in his life.

One day, Tom heard about the Healthyroads® program from his wife. His wife's insurance offered Tom the option to join the program. And if he could quit, Tom and his wife could end up saving money on health insurance premiums. This pushed him to commit to quitting.

When Tom signed up, he was paired with a Healthyroads Coach® who helped talk him through the quitting process. His coach taught him how to change his habits so that he would not want to smoke as much. And when he did crave a cigarette, he learned how to get through it. After three calls to his coach, Tom received a Get Started! Kit. The kit included products to help in his journey to quit smoking once and for all.

Now, Tom feels like a new person. He has been smoke-free for almost a whole year. He knew things had changed when his bowling friends would go smoke and Tom had no problem staying behind. He credits some of his success to the dedication of his coach. He says that “she was

a constant positive reinforcement” throughout his quitting process. And now that he's learned new habits, Tom is confident that he will remain smoke-free for the rest of his life.



Imagine...

Your own customized, 7-day exercise program created by a certified personal trainer or a registered dietitian analyzing your diet to build you a healthy eating plan meal-by-meal. Healthyroads offers these great services and much, much more!

Call **877.330.2746**
or visit
www.healthyroads.com
to enroll today.



Diet and Exercise Rock Out for an Enhanced Workout

Motivation is an important part of exercise. It's what kicks you off the couch when slacking off sounds good. It's also what keeps you going when your jogging buddy doesn't show or your favorite exercise gear is in the wash. From time to time, though, it can be hard to stay motivated. Adding music to your workout may be just the thing you need to get fired up and stay that way.

Start by listening to upbeat music before your workout. An energetic tune can increase your breathing and heart rate. It's a great way to prepare your body for action. Listen during your workout and you may be less likely to feel fatigue. That's because music can distract you from the signs that your body is working hard (like breathing heavy and sweating).

Adding music to your routine may also improve your endurance. If you're a walker, for instance, you may be able to walk farther without much more effort just by adding music to your stride. Your working muscles may benefit from tunes, too. Music may help improve blood flow and relax working muscles.

You may have already felt the mood-boost that music can give. But add it to your workout and it's like sending your brain on a mini vacation. This dynamic duo can help you:

- * Clear your head
- * Boost your thinking power
- * Get more pleasure from a workout

Of course, there is lots of music to choose from. No doubt, music with a quick tempo or a strong rhythm can get you going. But some studies show that medium-paced or even slow, quiet music can also be helpful. In one study, people preferred a medium tempo for vigorous workouts. In another, people were able to work out on a treadmill longer while listening to peaceful tunes. Bottom line: Music is personal. Experiment a little to find music that works well for you.

If your own music options have worn out their welcome, visit your library's CD section. Or try a music mix designed for your activity. A quick Web search provides lots of music tracks made just for running, walking, yoga, spinning, and more. Download tracks to play at home or add them to your MP3 player. Some cost, while others are free. Either way, when it comes to exercise, you won't skip a beat.

Coach Tip:

Make a list of 10 favorite songs and download them onto an MP3 player for your next workout. They'll motivate you to get moving and pump up your attitude and energy.





Smoking Raises Risk of Colds and Infections

Everyone catches a cold or the flu now and then. But if you smoke, you may find yourself sick more often than those who don't. Your symptoms may also be more severe. And you may not get well as fast. That's because cigarette smoke can weaken your immune system and make it harder for your body to fight illness.

Researchers are still learning how smoking affects the immune system. What they do know is that it lowers your body's ability to clear infection. It also changes the structure of your airways. These changes make it easier for bacteria and viruses to invade your lungs, throat, and nasal passages and make you sick.

When you smoke, your immune system also has to work extra hard to clear the many chemicals in cigarettes from your body. As a result, it may be too weak to fend off the latest cold that's passing around the office or the flu bug that catches a ride home on your child's lunch box.

If you are in good health, you might easily dismiss the effect that smoking has on your immune system. It's not obvious at first. But consider this.

Compared to nonsmokers, smokers are:

- * More likely to catch the flu
- * Up to 4 times more likely to catch bacterial pneumonia

Smokers are also up to 6 times more likely to have gum disease. So the next time your dentist questions your flossing habits, keep in mind that smoking (and not oral hygiene) may be the problem.

It's not just cold and flu season that puts a smoker at risk. Those who light up are also at greater risk of more serious infections like:

- * Legionnaires' disease (a type of pneumonia)
- * Meningitis (swelling in the lining of the brain or spine)
- * Peptic ulcers
- * Abnormal cells in the cervix caused by HPV infection

If you already have a lung disease like COPD, smoking can also change how your immune system responds to infection and make your condition worse.

There are plenty of reasons to quit smoking. But improving your health is one of the best. If you find it hard to quit for yourself, try quitting for your friends and family. Your cigarette smoke affects their health, too.

Kids are especially sensitive to cigarette smoke. Being around it increases their risk of meningitis and lung and ear infections. The risk for ear trouble may start even before they are born if their mother smokes while pregnant.

The good news is that when you quit smoking, your body starts to respond within 20 minutes. Your immune system improves within just 6 weeks. In 1–9 months of living smoke-free, your lungs are much better at fighting off infection.

Now is a good time to pick a quit date. Before you start, ask your doctor to help you make a plan to quit. Also ask about any steps you might take, like vaccinations, to help you avoid the flu and other illnesses. You'll be healthier while you're on your journey to living smoke-free.



Serious About Quitting?

We at Healthyroads understand the challenges of quitting smoking. That's why we offer a comprehensive Tobacco Cessation program that provides you with the best techniques to help you quit—once and for all. From our phone-based coaching program and educational materials to our online resources and discounted nicotine replacement therapy products, we give you every chance to succeed. For anyone considering quitting smoking, take the first step and contact us today at **877.330.2746** or visit www.healthyroads.com.

What We Know About Acai

You may never have tried acai (ah-sigh-EE) berries. But chances are good that you've heard of them. Though these purple berries come from afar (Central and South America), the U.S. market is ripe with products made with them.

Acai products are popular because the berries have been touted as a superfood. People who sell acai products claim they can help you lose weight or slow the signs of aging. The berries are also sold with the lofty promise of helping fight cancer and heart disease.

Studies have just begun on the acai berry. Scientists don't yet know if acai berries have specific health benefits. But they do know that berries of all kinds are high in antioxidants. These are important because they help protect the cells in your body from damage.

Fresh acai berries aren't available in the U.S. To try acai, you'll have to settle for juice, frozen pulp, or powder found in various food products.

While you're enjoying acai, don't forget to eat other berries and fruits, too. A healthy diet includes a variety of whole fruits and 100 percent fruit products. Buying local fruit in season is always a great choice. It can help you get the best of good nutrition *and* flavor.



Mind-Body Techniques

Write It Out for Better Health

Stress is part of daily life. You can't escape it. Some stressful events are small, like sitting in traffic or meeting a work deadline. Others are big: a death in the family, a divorce, a serious illness, or money problems. You may already know that getting enough sleep and exercising can help with stress. Do you know that writing can, too?

It turns out that taking time to write down your thoughts and feelings about a stressful event several times a week is good for your mind and body. It can boost your mood and your sense of well-being. Whether you choose to write in a journal or use a computer, writing regularly may help:

- * Lower your blood pressure
- * Get your lungs and liver working better
- * Increase your body's ability to fight illness

It's not clear exactly how writing helps the body deal with stress. But researchers think that organizing your thoughts into words on a printed page or screen may help you adapt and process experiences and feelings. Keeping thoughts to yourself also takes work.

Releasing them on the page helps free your body from this added stress.

If you'd like to give expressive writing a try, follow these tips to get started:

- * Write for 20 minutes about something that's bothering you.
- * Write for at least 3 days in a row in a private, quiet place.
- * Don't worry about spelling or grammar—this writing is just for you.

Keep in mind that you can stop writing any time you feel too uncomfortable. It's common to feel a bit worse right after writing. But you should not feel serious distress. If you do, ask a friend, family member, or doctor for help.

Writing may not lower stress for everyone; but if it works for you, it's one more tool to keep in your stress relief tool box. So, grab a notebook and find a quiet place to put your thoughts on the page and your stress behind you.

Get rewarded
for starting today!

Healthroads has been purchased for you by your employer. Enroll at no cost and we'll send you a Get Started! Kit containing products to support you in achieving your healthy living goals.

Members also receive these features at no cost:

- * Telephone coaching with dietitians and personal trainers
- * Award-winning materials
- * Password-protected website for tracking your progress
- * Customized meal and exercise plans

For more information, call us toll-free at **877.330.2746** or visit us online at www.healthroads.com.