



Custom fit of Brevard Health & Fitness Studio

819 E. Strawbridge
Ave.

Quik Bites

Celebrate the Opening
of Custom Fit of Brevard
with a relaxing evening
of hor's doeuvres,
drinks, and live jazz.
March 21st at 7pm

Join us March 11th for
Vision Boarding
Turn Goals into
achievable realities.
Experience our new
format - geared toward
moving you closer to

Please join us on the 1st
Monday of every month
for Reiki circle and the
3rd Wednesday of every
month for meditation
group. Call for more

Interested in training for
the Melbourne Art Fest
5k? Whether your new
ot training for time, join
Team Custom Fit!!!

Custom Fit News

March 2009

The Physiology of Stress

Stress itself is actually just our perception of a situation. It is the way we react to a “stressor”, a stimulus with the potential to trigger our “fight or flight response” – termed our “stress reactivity”.

The fight or flight response used to be vital to our survival. It is the way our bodies were evolutionarily designed to handle threats against our safety. For example, a caveman encountering a lion in search of its next meal (the stressor) needed to react quickly. Adrenalin is secreted to increase his heart rate, blood pressure and breathing. His body retains fluid to increase blood volume which increases the transport of oxygen and nutrients to his muscles. Cortisol signals his body to release free fatty acids from fat tissue and sugar (glycogen) from the liver, into his blood stream for energy. Blood is directed toward his muscles to make him strong and fast enough to make his escape. If fight or flight wasn't initiated, he became the meal.

Most of us are never in danger of becoming a meal. Occasionally you'll hear the story of an average mother who finds superhuman strength to save a child in danger; Perhaps you have stepped off of a curb and had to quickly jump back on to avoid oncoming traffic (we've all marveled at how nimble we can be in a serious situation). But on a daily basis our triggers are far less daunting. Usually they psychological; we are overloaded with work, arguing with a loved one, or being cut off in traffic. None of these stressors requires us to be quick or strong, but our stress reactivity remains the same. As a consequence we build up these stress products and over time.

Let's reconsider our caveman; his heart beat, breathing and blood pressure are increased, his serum cholesterol levels are elevated and blood is being diverted away from his stomach to other muscles, even though his body was in the process of digesting his morning meal. Now imagine that he is sitting at his desk and all of those stress products have no outlet. It is this build up that eventually leads to illness and even disease. A low stress diet is low in fat, refined sugars and carbohydrates. Refined sugars, white flour, white rice, and high fructose corn syrup are not only *stressors*, but they are also harder for your body to process under stress. Several small meals throughout the day will maintain your energy supply and help to avoid swings in mood and blood sugar that can make even the smallest of situations stressful. Some foods can trigger or increase *stress reactivity*. Anything with caffeine has the potential to cause the release of stress hormones and produce a stress reactivity response. Fruits, nuts, raw veggies, low-fat yogurt and cottage cheese and high fiber carbohydrates are chocked full of the vitamins, minerals and nutrition to keep our body's healthy enough to fight and counter balance the negative effects of stress.

When emotions build up, we often look for a physical outlet to “get it out”. Exercise is more productive than slamming doors. It gives those stress products that build up a chance to do their thing. A good workout often clears your mind and makes you a better problem solver. Don't ever underestimate the power of the “runner's high”

Most significantly is the fact that, as defined, stress is simply our perception of a situation. Many techniques such as mediation, positive affirmation and even a good yoga class are invaluable to changing the way you react to the triggers in your life. Remember, no matter what you encounter, you're never in danger of being a meal.

Quick Facts on Fiber

Fiber is not digested or absorbed into your body. Although it is classified as a carbohydrate, it doesn't have calories and it isn't considered a nutrient. *So what is it?*

Fiber is an internal scrub brush for your body. It is a general term for the indigestible part of plant foods that gives plants their structure. There are two distinct types of fiber; soluble and insoluble.

Insoluble fiber or "cellulose" is the main fiber in the cell walls of plant foods. Cellulose can absorb water, but it cannot dissolve in it.

- *By absorbing water, insoluble fiber keeps your stool soft, bulky and easy to pass. It is invaluable for maintaining a healthy colon and avoiding bowel problems such as constipation, hemorrhoids, and diverticulitis. Bran of any kind is an excellent source of insoluble fiber.*

Soluble fiber does dissolve in water. It forms a soft gel that moves slowly through your digestive system. This gel binds to many substances in your digestive tract as it makes its way out of your body. This binding ability has many health benefits.

- *A high fiber diet can help reduce your risk of heart disease and lower your cholesterol. Your liver uses cholesterol (some that it takes from your blood stream) to make digestive juices called *bile acids*. Bile acids are secreted into your small intestine to help you digest your food - primarily fats. If you consume a low fiber diet, much of these bile acids - and the cholesterol contained in them, are absorbed back into your body. Soluble fiber, like that found in oats (oat bran, oatmeal etc.), can trap those bile acids during digestion and carry them out of your body. As a consequence, your liver must remove more cholesterol from your blood to make new bile acids. This cycle ultimately creates a drop in total cholesterol.*
- *Eating a high fiber diet can help people with diabetes better control their blood sugar. Because it slows down the digestion of carbohydrates, it slows down their absorption into the blood stream preventing a sharp spike in blood sugar after a meal. If you or someone you know suffers from diabetes, speak to your doctor about how a high fiber diet can help you better control your blood sugar.*

Slower digestion also gives you a long- lasting "full feeling" which can help to control hunger and your caloric intake. Food labels do not break down fiber by type. Plant foods always have both soluble and insoluble fiber, so you only need to focus on

total intake. For optimal health, the average person should consume about **25g-38g of fiber per day**. For the average American, a highly refined, packaged food lifestyle yields only about 5-14g of fiber per day. Every extra step our food takes through processing is additional fiber that is lost before it gets to you.

To increase your fiber intake;

- *Check the labels of foods you commonly consume - the first step is awareness!*
- *Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables, nuts, seeds, and legumes (i.e. beans)*
- *Opt for brown rice over white rice*
- *Choose whole grain breads that have at least 3g of fiber per slice*
- *Boost your breakfast cereal - be sure you choose cereals that contain at least 5g of fiber per serving and less than 8g of sugar.*
- *Add fiber in the form of wheat germ, oatmeal and flax seeds to recipes (for breads, muffins, pancakes etc.) to make them healthier*
- *Add wheat germ, nuts, seeds or dried fruit to foods like yogurt, oatmeal and cereal*

It is always advisable to increase your fiber intake slowly, or you risk a potentially uncomfortable gastrointestinal situation. It is also very important to drink plenty of water to accommodate its absorption in your intestines. Talk to your doctor about the importance of fiber in your diet.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to everyone who supported me through the first 2 ½ years of Custom Fit of Brevard. It is thanks to all of you that Custom Fit now has a beautiful Downtown location. It is my mission to provide all of you with a place to get a great workout - be it through personal training, yoga, spinning, pilates, running and group exercise - healthy nutrition planning and education, and personal growth - through reiki, meditation, and vision boarding. If you haven't had a chance to visit the studio or take advantage of the classes and other amenities offered, please be sure to stop by. Also check out www.customfitofbrevard.com to learn all we have to offer!

Working the Hill.....

It's time to begin our training for the Melbourne Art Festival 5k!! For those of you who are not familiar with this 3.1 mile spectacle, the race begins on Melbourne Avenue just West of Front street and runs up and over the Melbourne Causeway. More than 1500 people "competed" in last year's event. Athletes of every age, size, shape and fitness level show up to participate in Melbourne's most popular running event. Each year Custom Fit trains a small contingent of runners dedicated to doing their best to move up and over the cause way. An important component of our training regime is hill training. The obvious benefit for our 5k runners is a competence and confidence when trudging up the hill at our version of "lightening speed". But behind those race training benefits lurks more for even just the casual exerciser.

There is no question that hill training is challenging, but it feels so good when you're done. Depending on how you coordinate your workout, hill training can condition you aerobically (cardiovascular endurance), an-aerobically (your lactic acid

threshold or “max”), and for muscular fitness and strength.

Hill work is almost like resistance training for your legs. Your muscles are forced to overcome the incline and the resistance of gravity. It strengthens your glutes, hamstrings, and calves (all muscles in the back of your legs) as well as your quad muscles (front of your thighs) - which don't work as hard on the flats. The strong push-off that is necessary to move you up the hill strengthens your ankles. With driving arms and a slight forward lean, you will work your core as well as other upper body muscles. And it increases your resistance to fatigue and helps you to maintain good form and a steady pace when on flat terrain.

There are a few ways to structure a workout that involves hills. If you are looking for a good cardiovascular workout, add a causeway walk or run into your weekly routine. Both the Melbourne and Eau Gallie causeways have convenient parking and a sidewalk for pedestrian traffic. With a pass in each direction, you will get the benefit of about one mile worth of incline plus any extra distance you add on to that. Once you have mastered the pass – you can challenge yourself a little further. You can add more passes and/or increase the pace at which you go over the hill.

One of my favorite workouts is *hill repeats* (no - not because I am a sick girl...). It's a great way to change inject new life into your regular routine. After my warm-up, I determine a beginning and end point for each hill repeat that I plan to do. This can be anywhere from running the distance of 2-4 telephone poles to pushing all the way to the top of the causeway. I walk or run from point A to point B as quickly as I can. The shorter the repeat, the faster I want to move up the hill. Once I hit “point B” I turn around and slowly make my way back to “point A” and do it again. It's not a bad idea to try this workout in a group setting before doing it on your own!

In order to reap the benefits of hill work, you need to be mindful of your form. On the hills you want to keep a short stride. Your back should be straight with just a slight forward lean. Be careful not to hunch at the waist. Instead lead with your hips moving up the hill. Your elbows should be driving back and up (behind you) and your gaze is straight ahead. Relax your neck and shoulders to facilitate breathing and to conserve energy. What goes up must come down; Relax on the way down. Lengthen your stride, lower your knees, keep your shoulders over your hips and let your shoulders lean slightly forward. Don't lean back and break your natural movement – let your weight pull you forward. See you on the Causeway! If you would like to run and train as a member of TEAM CUSTOM FIT (the orange team of course) Call Me at 321-749-3715

Why Stretch?

Stretching is one of the most important components of a well balanced exercise program, yet it is often the most overlooked. Here are some things to think about the next time you consider skipping your stretch routine after your workout:

* *Stretching improves the range of motion of your joints.* Good range of motion keeps you in better balance, which will help keep you mobile and less prone to injury.

* *Stretching increases flexibility.* Flexible muscles can improve your daily performance. Tasks such as lifting packages, bending to tie your shoes or getting up off the floor become easier and less tiring.

* *Stretching improves circulation.* Stretching increases blood flow to your muscles. It is vital to your health that blood can carry oxygen and nutrients into every part of your body and carry toxins and waste products out.

* *Stretching promotes better posture.* Frequent stretching keeps your muscles from getting tight, allowing you to maintain proper posture.

* *Stretching can relieve stress.* Stretching relaxes the tense muscles that often accompany stress. During the day, do a “body check” to identify where you are tight and tense. Take a few moments to stretch these areas to minimize aches and pains.

Now that you know why stretching is important, here are some key points to remember when you do stretch;

Warm up first. Exercising or stretching muscles when they're “cold” increases your risk of injury. It is crucial to perform a low intensity activity (i.e. walking) for at least 5 minutes prior any physical activity, including stretching. The best time to stretch in conjunction with exercise is at the end of your workout.

Don't bounce and focus on a pain-free stretch. When you ease into a stretch, you should expect to feel tension. If it hurts, you've gone too far. Back off to the point where you don't feel any pain, then hold the stretch.

Don't hold your breath while you're stretching.

Target major muscle

groups: Focus on your hamstrings, quadriceps, calves, gluteals, hips, lower back, neck and shoulders. Stretch any muscles that you target during a workout or that you routinely use at work or at “play”.

As a general rule, stretch whenever you exercise. If you don't exercise regularly, you might want to stretch at least three times a week to maintain flexibility.

There are many philosophies regarding the best way to stretch, here are 2 options:

Option 1) Hold stretch for 15-30 seconds at a time and repeat in 1-3 sets for each muscle group

Option 2) Stretch each muscle for 2-3 seconds at a time and repeat 5-6 times before moving on to the next muscle group.

Because there are so many different ways to stretch, it is advisable to discuss what type of stretching you should be doing with a professional.



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