



# Custom Fit News

November 2008

**Custom fit  
of Brevard  
Health & Fitness  
services**

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## **Vision Boarding Party**

Do you have big plans for  
2009?

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## Surviving the Holidays

By now you have heard the statistics; the average person gains 7 pounds in the weeks between Thanksgiving Day and New Year's Day. That's an average of just over one pound per week! One pound of body fat is equal to 3500 calories –therefore, you would need to consume an extra 500 calories every day to gain 1 pound in a week. Over the course of 6 weeks that works out to be over 24,000 extra calories - above your regular intake - to gain 7 pounds.

The point is, it is not our indulgence at any one meal that causes us to tip the scale in such a dramatic fashion. During that six week period we give ourselves a license to eat. We toss away good judgment in the name of Holiday cheer. And, while it is possible to consume between 2000-3000 calories at a Christmas feast, it's the parties, alcohol, baked goods and eggnog that do the most damage this time of year. Here are some tips to help you avoid some classic holiday pitfalls:

- **Don't go to a party hungry** – have a snack before you go. This will give you the opportunity to sample a few things, but not go over board. If you don't think you can face a smorgasbord of food without overeating, have a full meal before hand and just go to socialize.
- **Do not think of a party as an all you can eat buffet.** Make one plate of food – choose 3 of the most interesting things - eat them and then walk away.
- **Do not "pick". It is incredible how fast calories can add up.** Consider cheese and crackers; 1 ounce of cheese is the size of an average cube of dice. It has 100 calories and 10g of fat – add a 1/4 ounce of pepperoni and a Ritz cracker and you're looking at 150 calories and 13g of fat.
- **Watch the alcohol.** Alcohol is very calorie dense at 7 calories per 1 gram (1g of carbohydrates or protein has 4 calories per gram). The calories add up even faster when we add juices and high sugar mixers. Sparkling water is a great alternative without the calories.
- **Do not give baked goods as a gift (unless you can get someone else to bake them for you).** Between licking the spoon and taste testing your work, you're setting yourself up for disaster.
- **Don't keep baked goods you receive as gifts at home or at your desk.** You will be tested daily by these goodies and the well meaning people who bring them. The break room can be a mine field. Pick one day during the week to indulge in the most interesting Christmas treat and disregard the rest. You can't have one of everything!
- **Don't be "too busy to exercise".** A good workout will clear your mind during a season that can make you crazy! If you are putting off beginning a program until the first of the year...stop making excuses and get out there now. Even a 20-30 minute walk a few times a week will burn calories, build muscle and improve the way you feel.
- **Don't plan on going on a "diet" or starting weight loss plan after the first of the year.** It sets up the scenario for binge eating in anticipation of the deprivation to come. Just eat smart and exercise NOW. It is always a "good time" to make better choices.

There is so much to be thankful for this time of year - food doesn't need to be the focal point of our celebration. Nutritional balance and exercise will be the gift we give ourselves as we make our move into 2009

Happy Thanksgiving Everyone!

*Successful people do the things that Unsuccessful people don't like to do ~ ??*

## Quick Facts on: Vitamin D

Vitamin D is essential for keeping your bones, skin, and immune system healthy and may be important in preventing colon cancer. Just a little bit of sunshine is all you need to get your daily requirement of vitamin D.

In order to get all the other vitamins, you need to eat them. Vitamin D is a bit different. You actually make vitamin D when the ultra-violet rays from the sun hit your skin. UV light makes a type of cholesterol that is found just under your skin turn into a form of vitamin D called vitamin D3 – or cholecalciferol. This Vitamin D3 is then carried to your liver where it changes into a more active form of vitamin D. Some of this vitamin D stays in your liver and helps you reabsorb calcium from your blood stream. Some goes to your kidneys and becomes even more active. Vitamin D also travels to your bones to help them hold onto their calcium, and the rest goes to your intestines where it absorbs calcium from food.

Believe it or not, a surprising number of people are deficient in vitamin D. It isn't very abundant in food and some people – particularly those from the North - aren't out in the sun enough. Living in Florida we are at an advantage because we can engage in outdoor activities year round. We need a bit more time in the sun in the winter, but only 10-30 minutes of summer sun a day could meet your daily requirements.

Although it is not advisable to spend an extended period in the sun without protection, Sunscreen 8 or higher will block the UV rays needed to make vitamin D. Sitting next to a closed window doesn't work either. The glass will block the rays too.

The good news is that vitamin D is a fat soluble vitamin – meaning your body will store it in fat tissue and in the liver. This means that if you have a few big days in the sun and find some in your food, your body has stores it can rely upon. Healthy adults need about 200 IU (international units) of vitamin D per day - although some nutritionists might argue that you need more. The older you are, the higher your requirement for vitamin D. While you can't overdose on the vitamin D that your body makes itself, you do need to be careful you don't over-supplement. Too much vitamin D can cause build up of calcium in blood and increase your risk of heart attack and kidney stones. You shouldn't exceed 1000 IU of vitamin D daily, but it's best to check with your doctor for what is best for you.

Many of us associate vitamin D with milk. Milk is fortified with vitamin D because without it, calcium just wouldn't work. It regulates how much calcium you absorb from your food, and it regulates the amount of calcium in your blood. Milk and margarine are fortified, but most dairy products (cheese, yogurt etc.) are not (organic and raw milk aren't usually fortified).

In addition to the sun and fortified milk, look for vitamin D in: Salmon, tuna, sardines and other oily fish as well as fish oil, beef liver, and egg yolks.

### **OTHER IMPORTANT NOTES:**

\* Your immune system needs vitamin D to make monocytes - a type of white blood cell that fights infection.

\* People with inflammatory bowel diseases tend to be low in vitamin D – research is being done in this area for treatment and prevention.

\* Vitamin D helps clear up psoriasis

\* Certain drugs – cholesterol lowering drug, corticosteroid drugs (cortisone, prednisone etc.), anticonvulsant drugs, can deplete vitamin D levels.

\* Alcohol blocks the ability of your body to absorb in intestines and store in your liver.

## Quick Facts on:

## Calcium

Calcium plays two very distinct roles in our bodies. About 99 percent of our total body calcium is used to build and maintain bones and teeth. The remaining 1 percent circulates in our blood helping to regulate some very important body functions. Among other things, calcium helps to regulate our heart beat, contracts and relaxes our muscles, is needed to make many different hormones and enzymes (including those that control digestion and how we make energy and use fats), helps build connective tissue, send messages along nerves and it helps to clot your blood. It is a very busy mineral. This 1 percent in our blood is so important, that our bodies will pull calcium from our bones to ensure there is always enough to support these responsibilities. If this calcium is not replaced, bones may become porous and weak.

Once in our thirties, we naturally begin to break down bone faster than we rebuild it – thus compounding the problem and making conditions such as osteoporosis and brittle bones a real threat. This is why it is so important to get calcium in our diet. A good goal is to consume between 1000-1500mg of calcium per day. Certain foods, medications or lifestyle habits can make a difference in how our bodies use calcium – here are some tips that will help to get the most benefit from the calcium we consume.

- *Vitamin D is a must for calcium absorption – vitamin D is found in fatty fish and fish oils, fortified milk and sunlight.*
- *Too much protein or sodium in your diet causes your body to excrete calcium in the urine.*
- *Too much caffeine coupled with a low calcium diet can cause bone loss*

While using calcium supplements to enhance our dietary intake is not a bad idea, it is not wise to rely on them in place of food. Not only is dietary calcium more “bio-available” (easier for our body to absorb and use) than calcium from supplements, there is usually more than just calcium that we can benefit from when you eat the right foods.

- Low-fat or nonfat milk (1cup) 320mg
- Almonds (1oz) 80mg
- Low-fat American cheese (1oz) 124mg
- Low-fat cottage cheese (1c) 138mg
- Black beans (1c) 103mg
- Broccoli (1c) 94mg
- Low-fat yogurt (1c) 400mg
- Calcium fortified OJ (1c) 300mg
- Tofu (1/2c) – avg. 130mg (check label)
- Spinach (1c) 244mg

# Custom Fit

“Custom Fit Answers” – Is a new installment in Custom Fit News. The first question comes to us from Custom Fit of Brevard member and local Entrepreneur, Suzie DeBusk. Suzie asks; **Is there a correlation between age, what we eat and the amount of exercise we get? In other words, is there a number of hours/type of exercise I could do and not worry about what I eat? It seems when I was young(er) I could eat what I wanted and not worry. Is this a function of metabolism combined with age?**

It is estimated that the average 50 year old woman burns 300-500 calories less, per day, than she did in her 20's.

There is no doubt that our metabolism slows down as we age, specifically our basal metabolic rate. Our BMR is the amount of calories that we burn at rest – the amount required to keep us alive and maintain our current body weight.

\*The average woman has a BMR of about 1200 calories per day, the average man about 1500 calories (again, that is before we factor in daily activity and exercise).\*

Studies suggest that the main reason for this is the change in our body composition. After the age of 40 we lose about 10% of our high calorie consuming lean muscle tissue, each decade. Some studies suggest there is even a decrease in the amount of calories used by our organs.

We also have a change in our lifestyle as we age. We typically spend more time tending to our hectic schedules, work, spouses, and our kids. Much of our activity comes solely from preplanned exercise rather than additional bursts of spontaneous activity.

We are more likely to park close to the store and less likely to play a hard fought game of pick-up.

And studies have also found a link between sleep deprivation and the secretion of the hormone ghrelin. Ghrelin triggers hunger and decreases our energy expenditure. Sleep deprivation can be a result of the natural decrease in our melatonin levels as we age, work and family stresses, or the riggers of menopause.

Now let's examine our workouts. Although we may feel we are putting the same effort into our workouts, we are probably working at a lower intensity level than we did at a younger age and therefore burning fewer calories. I know when I run a 5k now, it feels a lot harder and I am a heck of a lot slower than I used to be! ☺

The hours of exercise that would be required to “eat whatever we want and not worry about it” would be tremendous. The truth is that even a rigorous spinning class doesn't burn as many calories as we think it does or would like it to. That doesn't mean that the time we spend working out isn't valuable, it means we need to be more realistic about our calories out vs. calories in.

Consider that it is not improbable for us to go out to dinner and consume over 1500-2000 calories at one meal (REFER back to August 2008 newsletter) – most of us can financially afford to enjoy more meals out than we did when we were younger.

So if you are one of the fortunate ones who “ate whatever they wanted and didn't worry about it”, the best thing to do is appreciate your past blessings. It is wise to incorporate muscle building activities into our exercise routine as a means of preserving our lean muscle tissue, but beyond this, there is no specific food or set of exercises that can replace the common sense approach to eating less and moving more. Perhaps this facet of the aging process is our body's way of reminding us that being thin or having a quick metabolism isn't indicative of being healthy. By being mindful of our intake, we are more likely to get the appropriate nutrients that we need to keep us healthy and strong through the aging process.

*If you would like to submit a health, fitness, or nutrition related question, please e-mail it to*

*[Melissa@customfitofbrevard.com](mailto:Melissa@customfitofbrevard.com). Indicate in your e-mail if you would prefer to submit your question anonymously.*

## The skinny on Abs

There are 4 abdominal muscles that make up what we affectionately refer to as our abs.

The largest of these is our rectus abdominis. This is the wide flat sheet of muscle that runs from the middle from our chest to below our belly button - our “six pack”. It gives us the ability to “crunch” up and curl our spine. Our Internal and External obliques run diagonally up and down the side of our body (sliding from our ribs down “into our front pockets”, & from our ribs down “into our back pockets”). They allow us to twist and bend to the side. Lastly we have the transverse abdominis which sits directly beneath the rectus abdominis. It is the deepest of all our ab muscles. It stabilizes our trunk. Although it isn't responsible for any movement, we use it when we exhale forcefully, cough or sneeze. While we don't “target” the transverse abdominis through any particular exercise, we strengthen it by pulling our abs inward and exhaling strongly when we are doing exercises that target our obliques and rectus abdominis.

- **“Doing ab exercises will help me tone my middle & reveal my ‘six pack’”:** Ab exercises cannot reduce the amount of body fat around your mid section. Our ab muscles and the fat that rests over them are 2 entirely different entities. While it is worthwhile to do crunches to strengthen and tone our core muscles, we won't flatten our belly until we reduce the layer of fat.
- **“For best results I should do abs everyday”:** Treat your abs like any other muscle group – train them hard and then follow up with a day of rest. Overtraining only invites neck and lower back problems. If you can easily complete hundreds of reps or do abs several days in a row, you may be performing the exercise incorrectly or choosing those that are too easy for you. Either way, you aren't doing your abs much good.
- **“I have to work my upper and lower abs”:** The rectus abdominis is one large sheet of muscle. Any crunch works the whole thing. It is true you may feel an emphasis in the upper half of the sheet when lifting your upper body, as in a standard crunch, but if you perform the exercise slowly and correctly you will feel the entire muscle working no matter what exercise you choose.

When doing abdominal exercises you want to avoid doing “neck-ups”. Don't use your elbows, hands or shoulders to raise your body away from the mat. Place your hands behind your head, without interlacing your fingers, and tilt your chin up so as to fit a baseball in between your chin and chest. The action of bringing your shoulder blades off the floor should come from contracting and curling from your belly. To achieve this curling motion, imagine that someone standing over you dropped a medicine ball onto your stomach. That “doubling over” is the curling motion you are going for. The best news, you don't need to use machines or spend money on fancy gadgets to get a good ab workout. The floor is just as, if not more effective! Get crunchin'



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