

February 2006



Up Front Barbara Carthew

Use it or Lose it !

Are you overweight, tired, depressed, frustrated, suffering from aches and pains?

Depression, pain and concerns about growing older are often parts of a vicious circle. The more depressed you are, the more pain you feel; the more pain you feel, the more stressed you become and the more depressed you are. Depression makes one feel tired, but fatigue aggravates your depression and pain. Then gradually one loses interest in friends and activities or has trouble sleeping, feels unhappy, gains or loses weight, lacks energy, becomes less able to concentrate and feels worthless. This is not a healthy state. As we used to say, it can drive you to drink! Time to take stock and think about your mental, psychological and physical fitness.

Physical fitness is the ability to carry out daily tasks with vigor and alertness, without undue fatigue and with ample energy to engage in leisure time pursuits. Physical fitness for people is much like good maintenance for your car. Both allow you to start when you want, enjoy a smooth and relaxed trip, get to your destination without breakdown, and have some fuel in your tank when you arrive. How well a car works depends on its points, plugs, filters, hoses, tires, lubrication and fuel systems.

For us humans, physical fitness is a combination of cardiovascular fitness, muscle strength, endurance, flexibility and percent of body fat.

But what to do?

Get together with friends and laugh a lot! Go for regular walks - get a dog - go on a trip. Join a club and try something new like square dancing or curling, aquafit or Tai Chi. Start gardening with a passion or invite friends for lunch and cards. Start a cooking group. Make healthier choices in what you eat. Share your concerns with your doctor and understand your medication. Express your feelings more and listen to others ! Take time to relax and reflect on the positive things in your life; smile at people; pay attention to your appearance-your hair, your clothes, your posture. **And every day treat yourself to 20 or 30 minutes of physical exercise -** then stop and congratulate yourself !

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The Membership Express Sandra Murphy Provincial Coordinator



One of the real joys of my position as Provincial Coordinator for Community Links is heading out on the road to meet with members in your own districts. With the help of Community Links representatives, we will have held eight members' meetings from late fall and into this winter.

The purpose of the members' meetings is first of all to give me the opportunity to meet with as many of our members as possible and to bring you up to date on what is happening with Community Links. More important is the opportunity to find out the concerns of members and to get direction for the work of the organization. This was particularly important this year as we worked to facilitate discussion around enabling seniors to become engaged in healthy public policy development. This discussion focussed in particular on the role seniors in Nova Scotia should play in ensuring that the new *Strategy for Positive Aging* is fully realized. Our members' input will help form an action plan for engagement. This will be taken for further discussion at our Annual General Meeting in May.

Some of our member's meetings included a mini workshop on Volunteer Recruitment and Retention. This was in response to many of our members telling us that training is one of the services you want from Community Links. Training delivery will continue be a part of our work with members in the future.

All and all the meetings had a varied agenda to which those present responded positively. I will now look forward to seeing you all again in May at our AGM in Antigonish.



-Caroline Ploem, Coordinator

The Health Promotion Clearinghouse (HPC) is aimed at linking people and organizations involved in health promotion in Nova Scotia to community resources and expertise. Community Links is one of our partners, and a great example of a resource to which we are grateful to be able to link people.

The HPC provides timely access to health promotion resources that exist in the community and beyond. We have an extensive website, a toll-free number, a database of resources and resource people, as well as resource lists on a diversity of topics – building community capacity, volunteer development, physical activity, and proposal/grant writing to name a few.

The HPC's website is updated daily. Postings include events, workshops, conferences, job/volunteer opportunities, and resources. The website also includes links to various health promotion databases, organizations, and key documents available for download

If you have a resource or event you would like to see added to our website, or if you have any questions about HPC, please send us an email or give us a call. We want to hear from you!

For more information:

Caroline Ploem, Coordinator
Health Promotion Clearinghouse
Tel: 902.494.1917

Toll-free: 1.877.890.5094

Fax: 902.494.3594

E mail: hpc@dal.ca

Website: www.hpcclearinghouse.ca

Physical Activity for Seniors-It's Never Too Late!

According to Health Canada, 60% of older adults are inactive. And yet numerous studies have shown that maintaining physical fitness is a key factor in maintaining a good quality of life and independence as we age. The many benefits of being active include:

- Increased sense of vitality
- Better balance and less risk of falls
- Fewer aches and pains
- Better digestion
- A sounder sleep
- Relaxation and reduced stress
- Stronger bones and muscles
- Prolonged independence
- A healthier heart and blood pressure
- Feeling happier and mixing with other people

Excuses, Excuses

People of all ages have lots of excuses about why they are not active. *I haven't got time, I can't afford it, I don't like gyms, I'm too tired, there are no programs that suit me.* Ironically, seniors who suffer from arthritis may say that they have too many aches and pains to exercise, when in fact, keeping joint mobility and muscle strength is a key to managing the effects of arthritis. The general thinking among fitness and health providers today is that anyone can build more physical activity into their lives, regardless of their current level of fitness, the community in which they live, or their financial means.



Where to begin?

Health Canada's Guide to Healthy Active Living for Older Adults suggests that building up your activity level gradually in ten minute segments is best. Suggestions for

getting moving include taking a daily ten minute walk, getting off the bus one stop earlier, and doing some simple stretches every day. You may want to get advice from your doctor, other health care provider, local fitness or recreation association about what activities may be best for you. The guide also suggests that we should think of three areas of fitness:

1. **Endurance**-Continuous activities that make you feel warm and breathe deeply, increase your energy, and improve your heart, lungs and circulatory system.
Examples: walking, swimming, cycling, line dancing,
2. **Flexibility:** Gentle reaching, bending and stretching that keep your muscles relaxed and joints mobile.
Examples: Simple stretching routines, yoga, aqua fitness, tai chi,
3. **Strength and Balance:** Activities involving resistance which improve balance and posture, keep muscles and bones strong, and prevent bone loss
Examples: tai chi, yoga, weight training, aqua fitness

For a free copy of Health Canada's Physical Activity Guide for Older Adults and Handbook call 1-888-334-9769 or visit the website: www.healthcanada.ca/paguide



Lifeplex Opening Soon-A Lifeline for Valley Seniors

By Suzette Delmage
Manager, Lifeplex Wellness Centre

As a fitness leader, I have always been quite passionate about the topic of senior's fitness, having had the opportunity to teach senior's fitness classes for over ten years and recognizing the difference it can make in improving the independence and vitality of older adults.

Lifeplex, soon to open at Cornwallis Park, will provide the facilities, programs and expertise to improve the health and fitness levels of valley seniors. The aquatic facility will be offering programs specifically geared towards seniors such as aquafit classes, arthritis and water therapy classes. Health practitioner services such as physio and massage therapy will be available at the Lifeplex , with the availability of a warm water therapeutic pool.

The indoor walking track at the Lifeplex will provide a safe, climate controlled area to walk comfortably in all seasons. Other programs for older adults will include strength training, elderobics, yoga and tai chi.

As part of its holistic approach to wellness, Lifeplex will also offer seminars and workshops in health and lifestyle education including nutrition counseling, heart health, diabetes education, osteoporosis care and stress reduction.

The Lifeplex will be a welcoming place for seniors to meet, have fun, work out, relax and feel good about themselves. For many seniors, my hope is that it will provide that

first important step in taking control over their health and well-being.



VON Smart Program

VON Canada's SMART Program (Seniors Maintaining Active Roles Together) is designed as a physical activity intervention, reaching out to older adults who are at risk of losing quality of life and independence. The program involves community volunteers, many of them seniors, trained and certified as Seniors Fitness Instructors through the Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging. These trained fitness leaders then offer programs at a variety of community sites, like church and community halls.

One of the national SMART Pilot Programs took place in the Sydney area of Cape Breton. Participating seniors take a pre-test in September to measure their current upper and lower body strength, as well as their agility and balance. Post testing in May for those who stayed with the program showed significant improvements. There are now seven SMART programs operating in the Sydney area, with over 170 seniors and 25 volunteer fitness leaders participating. A program will soon be operating in Cheticamp. SMART Program acting Coordinator Barb Boutilier says that a new In Home Program is planned for spring. This program will bring volunteer fitness leaders into the homes of seniors who are housebound through frailty or other circumstances. For more information about the program, contact:
(902) 562-8519 or boutilier_barb@hotmail.com



On the Lighter Side

A lady I know had determined to start getting in shape, and had joined a fitness class at the local gym. When asked how she made out at her first class, she said, "Well, I tell you, I spent one whole hour going through the most tiring activities. I bent, I stretched, I twisted and turned, I reached and pulled, I sweated and panted, then I stretched some more. But by the time I got into my leotards, the class was over!

Submitted by Carol Welch, president, Community Links

Elderfit- Lunenburg



The Elderfit water exercise program was initiated ten years ago and has evolved into an outstanding success, with well over 100 participants. The program is endorsed by local doctors and other health professionals, who regularly recommend clients to register for the therapeutic, joint-friendly aqua-exercises

Our not-for-profit organization provides classes on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings as well as Tuesday and Thursday evenings under the leadership of skilled volunteer facilitators. Many of our clientele join to build and enhance ambulatory skills aided by the buoyancy (and water resistance) that significantly improves posture, balance and muscle tone. Bonding and camaraderie within the group makes exercising fun. Swimming is not a prerequisite. For more information, contact Martha Saunders, Elderfit Coordinator at (902) 766-0272.

Tai Chi for Balance



Several studies have shown that tai chi is very useful in improving balance and preventing falls among seniors. This combination of slow, graceful movements with names like "cloud hands" and "grasping sparrows tail" has become popular in Nova Scotia, and classes have been offered at various locations around the province. Tai chi moves can be adapted for varying levels of mobility. To find out if tai chi classes are available in your area, contact your local fitness center, municipal recreation department, or the Taoist Tai Chi Society Atlantic at (902) 422-8142 email ttcatlantic@ns.sympatico.ca

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Find 'the right fit' for fitness:

Following is a short list of who to contact for information on fitness opportunities in your area:

Seniors' Secretariat Programs for Seniors
1-800-670-0065
www.gov.ns.ca/scs

Recreation Nova Scotia
www.recreationns.ns.ca
(902)-425-1128
info@recreationns.ns.ca

Dance Nova Scotia (902) 422-1749
Email dans@eastlink.ca
www.dancens.ca

Nova Scotia Fitness Association
(902) 425-1128 ext 224
www.nsfa.info

or contact your local:
-municipal recreation department
- library
-YMCA
- health clinic or hospital



Notes and Notices



The Arthritis Society offers a free registry which provides the latest information on arthritis education, support and research. Those who sign

up also receive Arthritis Connections, the Nova Scotia Division's newsletter and other information geared to their specific form of arthritis.

(902) 429-7025

www.arthritis.ca/novascotia

Email: info@ns.arthritis.ca

Arthritis Information is also available through the Nova Scotia toll free information line at 1-800-321-1433

Seniors and Taxes



It's coming up to that time again! Community Links has a two-page summary of tax tips for seniors. To request a copy by e-mail or mail, contact Community Links At (902) 422-0914
Email: admin@nscommunitylinks.ca

Health info
for every
body

Canadian Health Network Website

Do you have questions about your health or the health of someone you love?

The Canadian Health Network offers a wealth of information about health topics to help you keep active and stay healthy. Visit the site at www.Canadian-Health-Network.ca



Looking for a way for your community group to raise funds? Recreation Nova Scotia (RNS) has been operating the Lucky Duck Lotto for 27 years. Groups get to keep 70% of ticket sales, while the rest of the proceeds go to support RNS programs and administration.. Tickets are available now and can be sold until April 21, 2006. Draw is May 5, 2006. For more info, contact RNS at (902) 425-1128 or info@recreationns.ns.ca

Community Links has moved!

We are now at Suite 201, 5516 Spring Garden Road in Halifax B3J 1G6, just downstairs from our previous location.

Our new phone number is 422-0914, FAX 422-9322

Our email, website and mailing address remain the same

admin@nscommunitylinks.ca, www.nscommunitylinks.ca, Box 29103, Halifax, NS B3L 4T8

Community Links gratefully acknowledges the support of Nova Scotia Health Promotion



Preventing Falls Together

Starting with this issue of our newsletter, we will be including a two-page insert with the latest news from our Preventing Falls Together Program. These inserts will also be available as resources and hand-outs for PFT related meetings and events. If you have items regarding falls prevention that you would like to see appear in the next PFT newsletter insert, please contact Susan King at sking@nscommunitylinks.ca or at (902) 539-6098

Keep the Heat 2005-2006



Seniors who receive the Guaranteed Income supplement may be eligible for a one-time rebate of \$100-\$250. This rebate is

also available to low income families and individuals of any age. For information on how to apply for the rebate, call toll free 1-800-670-4357 or visit www.gov.ns.ca and click on the Keep the Heat logo.

Coastal Communities Network AGM



April 28th and 29th at The Tatamagouche Centre
Contact CCN at ccn@ns.sypatico.ca or at (902) 485-4754 for more information

Mark your Calendars!



AGM 2006

Theme:

*The Power of Seniors in
Community*

May 12 and 13, 2006

St. Francis Xavier University



Antigonish, Nova Scotia

- members round table
- special guest speaker
- panel and discussion
- entertainment and fun!

Community Links Board of Directors 2005-2006

Carol Welch –Westport 902-839-2733 carolwe@tartannet.ns.ca	President	DHA# 2 Shelburne/Yarmouth/Digby
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Leo Poirier -Dartmouth 902-469-3907		DHA# 9 Halifax Regional Municipality/West Hants

We want your contributions!

Members are invited to send in articles, stories, notices of events, etc for publication in this newsletter. The theme for the next issue is *The Power of Seniors in Community* and the deadline to submit material is May 15, 2006. Send your submissions to admin@nscommunitylinks.ca or call 902-422-0914 for more information