

# Words on Wellness

August 2011



## Managing Stress Leads to Better Health



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Make peace with your stress. That’s the mantra of Mary Robinson, marriage and family therapist, who offers the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction™ class at several locations throughout Lee Memorial

Health System. The class is offered two to three times each year and includes weekly meetings to talk about ways participants can manage everyday stress.

Stress management is important for people of all ages, Mary says. “We are living longer and we haven’t thought about or planned for life issues that develop as we age. For younger people, there is pressure to perform. Our lives are a lot more complicated than they used to be.”

The idea behind the stress reduction program is to take the ideas and apply them to everyday situations for a lifetime. Cardiac nurse Janet Burch, RN, uses the techniques she learned to help patients in their recovery. She offers her own class—Heart, Soul and Stress—which teaches the physiologic effects of stress; stress reduction, taught by Mary; and yoga, with instructor Lisa Harvey.

Janet says that patients in the program benefit in different ways. “The key to stress management is finding what works for you,” she says.

### Techniques that can help reduce stress include:

- Breathing with intention. Breathe in for five seconds and out for five seconds.
- Finding a good support system. Friendship and relationships are important.
- Laughter. Watch a movie that makes you laugh. Laugh for no reason. It is contagious. There is even a laughing yoga.
- Gardening, reading, exercise, or anything that makes you happy and takes your mind from the stress.
- Tai chi or yoga.

“Like your medicine that only works when you take it, your stress management technique will only work while you are practicing it,” Janet says.

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\*An outpatient department of Lee Memorial Hospital



## Ask The Doc

Salvatore Lacagnina, D.O., is the Lee Memorial Health System vice president of health & wellness. He is board certified in internal medicine and has been in practice since 1993. As a regular part of Words on Wellness, Dr. Lacagnina is answering your health-related questions each month. Send your questions to [AskTheDoc@LeeMemorial.org](mailto:AskTheDoc@LeeMemorial.org).

### Question

*There seems to be two kinds of stress—good and bad stress. Is there a way to turn stress into energy? What do we need to learn to turn stress into a positive force?*

### Answer

*You are correct—there is good stress and bad stress. I believe this is defined by how we, as individuals, respond to whatever stress comes our way.*

*Stress occurs because of many reasons and when we feel stress in life, it is up to us to decide how to handle it. We can decide that this new stress is a challenge and deal with it in a positive way. This energizes us and makes us stronger. Or we can decide to see this as a negative and let it consume us.*

*For instance, stress often comes in the form of a lost job. If we look at this from a positive perspective, we can see this as a time to re-invent ourselves, go back to school and*

*learn a new skill that is marketable and will make it easier to find a job in the future. This is an opportunity for growth and to increase our future earning potential.*

*On the other hand, we can see this as a major negative that can cause us to get depressed, stay at home and not look for another job or skill to learn. This just snowballs into a worse situation that can lead to real physical illness.*

*As you can see, it is up to us to decide on how the stress in life will affect us. When stress occurs, think about how you will turn a negative into a positive so you can be stronger and healthier. Only then can you conquer this challenge and move on to the next one.*

Stay well! 



## Sculpting All Shapes and Sizes

For an hour on Mondays and Wednesdays, the yoga studio at the Wellness Center of Cape Coral is dimly lit, with soft music playing in the background. Sarah Mitchell and 15-20 members emphasize the balanced development of the body through core strength, flexibility and awareness in order to support efficient, graceful movement.

“Pilates strengthens the core,” explains Sarah, a 45-year-old group exercise instructor with more than 20 years of experience and a certification in mat Pilates. “It helps with flexibility and tones the entire body—any body.”

Sarah says Pilates is appropriate for people of all sizes, shapes, ages and fitness levels.

“For many movements, there are three options—beginner, intermediate and advanced,” Sarah says. “Most of my students progress to intermediate and advanced after only a few classes. It’s amazing how quickly the body transforms and strengthens when you commit.”

The combination of the yoga room’s layout and Sarah’s personalized teaching style allows her to be hands-on with members. She walks

around the studio to ensure her students understand each movement, and helps them adjust when necessary.

Once a personal trainer, Sarah prefers the group setting. One of her students, 73-year-old Constance Naylor, enjoys exercising with others, too.

“I take around 15 classes a week,” Constance says. “I come to the Wellness Center five days a week, and also do my cardio and strength training here. Sarah’s classes are always wonderful.”



**PILATES CLASS**  
10-11 a.m.,  
Mondays and Wednesdays  
Wellness Center of Cape Coral  
5:30-6:30 p.m., Mondays;  
10-11 a.m., Saturdays  
Lee Center for  
Rehabilitation &  
Wellness



## Training with Weights Builds Better Health for Women

From the Greek god, Atlas, to Mr. Universe, men have been lifting weights for centuries. Women did not start the heavy lifting until the 20th century. Weights are not just for fitness buffs, says Susan Ilczyszyn, Lee Center for Rehabilitation & Wellness manager.

“It is important that women incorporate weight training into their exercise routine to maintain good muscle and bone mass, and improve balance and cardiovascular endurance as they age,” Susan says.

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Susan says women should train with weights two or three days a week but not on consecutive days, unless they are working different parts of the body, including upper body one day and lower body the next day.

“As they progress, they find they are able to do the same number of reps of the same weight with ease and can increase resistance by adding more weight,” Susan says.

## Balance Your Body and Workout Routine with Strength Training

Whether you are looking to bulk up or shed weight, strength training is an important component to any fitness routine.

“Strength training definitely should be part of your workout,” says Tina Johnson, exercise specialist at Lee Center for Rehabilitation & Wellness. “Dedicating three workouts per week—every other day—to strength training promotes weight loss and improves joint function and bone density.”

Tina explains that strength training and building muscle makes your body more efficient. “Muscle burns calories,” she says. “So, the more muscle you have, the more calories your body is burning—even when you are not working out.”

Strength training is important for bone health and the prevention of osteoporosis-related fractures, as well. Weight-bearing exercises increase bone density, which is especially important for individuals with osteoporosis. Maintaining strong muscles improves coordination and balance—which is vital for those with osteoporosis and helpful in reducing the potential for any type of injury.

Choosing the right workout, weight and number of repetitions depends on your goals, strength and underlying medical issues. Tina recommends meeting with an exercise specialist or a personal trainer to determine the best plan of action.



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Happening This Month

The Wellness Center of Cape Coral

To register, call 578-4800 unless otherwise noted.

The Importance of an Annual Physical Exam

Presented by Dr. Salvatore Lacagnina. 4 p.m., Aug. 17

Strong Healthy Bones: Try Strength Training

Presented by Cindi McDill, exercise specialist. 11 a.m., Aug 20 and 22

Oh! My Aching Back

The Wellness Spine Class includes specific education on your posture, keeping your spine safe and which exercises are essential to accomplish your daily activities, presented by Kurt Gray, physical therapist. 6 p.m., Aug. 9

Lee Center for Rehabilitation & Wellness

To register, call 418-2000 unless otherwise noted.

The Importance of an Annual Physical Exam

Presented by Dr. Salvatore Lacagnina. 11 a.m., Aug. 18

The Benefits of Flexibility: How to Stretch

Presented by Tina Johnson, exercise specialist. 2:30 p.m., Aug. 25

August Massage Special

The month of August can be a hot one. Let us give you an hour-long cooldown with a dead sea salt scrub or a sugar scrub. Mention "Words on Wellness" and receive a 10 percent discount. Appointments required.

