

USAF Fitness & Sports Newsletter

January/
February 2003

Inside...

Is moderation the key to halting cravings?2
 To carb or not to carb? . . .2
 Air Force wins 2002 Armed Forces Rugby Championship3
 No Ephedra in Air Force fitness centers4
 Scale stuck?5
 Winter workouts5
 Treating muscle injuries .5
 Cancer and obesity— Is there a connection? .6
 Train up a child6



“Nothing can stop the man with the right mental attitude from achieving his goal; nothing on earth can help the man with the wrong mental attitude.”

—Thomas Jefferson



More than a resolution— a commitment

Starting an exercise program at the beginning of the year isn't too difficult, but sticking with one through the end of the year can be a challenge. It's staying motivated to continue working out that can be difficult. Often, what happens is that you miss a workout for some reason, and that decreases your motivation to complete the next one. Here are some ideas to help you get motivated and stay that way.

- ⇨ **Set realistic goals.** Your goals should be measurable so you can see yourself making progress, and they should be reachable.
- ⇨ **Keep goals short-term.** It's okay to set long-term goals, but set some shorter-term ones on the way to getting there so you can recognize your progress and stay encouraged toward reaching the long-term goals.
- ⇨ **Remember that every workout is an investment.** When you work out, you invest in your health. The workouts you've already done are contributing to your total return. Rather than let them go to waste, take stock of what you've learned to help you get moving again.
- ⇨ **Don't write your goals in stone.** By keeping your goals flexible, you can continue to move forward even if you don't reach your desired goal by the date you've set. Keep goals fluid. Reassess and readjust them to meet your needs.
- ⇨ **Reap the rewards of persistence.** When you stick to your workout and persist toward your goals, you will reap the rewards of better health.

Staying motivated isn't always easy, but it is necessary to achieve your fitness goals. Achieving your goals can often mean dealing with some setbacks, but when you are feeling sufficiently motivated, you will keep going until you've reached the point of success you're seeking.



IS MODERATION THE KEY TO HALTING CRAVINGS?

If you're trying to follow a low-fat diet for either weight loss or health reasons, you may have found that you can stick to it pretty well...for a while. However, about once a week you may find yourself craving those rich foods that you've been doing your best to avoid. Before you give in and indulge, consider what's causing that craving and what you might do to avoid it in the first place.

■ What causes cravings?

The jury is still out on the exact cause of cravings. Some possibilities include hormonal changes, a lack of certain brain chemicals, stress, and depression. However, when you're on a low-fat diet, one reason for cravings may be that your body is lacking in EFAs (Essential Fatty Acids). These fats, found in abundance in certain oils and in cold-water fish such as salmon, are necessary for the body. If you don't get enough of them, you will find yourself craving them.

■ Staying balanced

Even a low-fat diet should be balanced by including foods from a variety of food groups. Eating some fats in moderation can help you keep your diet stabilized and avoid the peaks and valleys that can lead to binges. Look for foods that are healthy, but include a smattering of the "good" fats that your body needs.

■ Moving forward

The key to a healthier diet is a permanent lifestyle change rather than a temporary "diet." When you seek to change your eating habits, remember that going to extremes can lead to extreme cravings and possibly caving in to those cravings. Avoiding cravings means eating a balanced diet as well as taking steps to ward off cravings if they do occur, such as going for a walk or drinking a glass of water. With a little forethought, you may be able to stick to that new diet and reach your weight-loss or health goals.



To carb or not to carb?

Whenver the American diet is discussed, you will hear the experts urging us to eat a balanced diet. Low-fat is best. Choose lots of fruits and vegetables. But what about carbohydrates?

This issue of carbohydrates is a complicated one. Complex carbohydrates are often high in refined flours and sugars. They may not be high fat, but that doesn't mean they are low calorie. Americans have cut way back on the fat in their diets, but overall they haven't really gotten much thinner. That's because while they are eating less fat, they are still eating plenty of high-calorie carbs.

To discover the best place for both carbs and fats in your diet, let's look at what a balanced diet really means. A balanced diet includes foods from all food groups—some in moderation, others in abundance. Fruits, vegetables, and whole grains are highly recommended, as are low-fat meats. Refined flours and sugars should be eaten in moderation, as should red meats and other foods that are high in fat.

It's important to understand that these different types of foods work together to supply the nutrients you need and help your body to burn calories. Carbohydrates digest more quickly than proteins. If you eat a meal high in carbs, you may be hungry again in a few hours. However, if you eat a meal that has carbs, proteins, and some fat along with some nutrient-rich fruits and vegetables, you will burn calories more efficiently and not feel hungry again so soon.

Eating a balanced diet is not an impossible goal. Rather, it is eating to help your body perform the way it was designed to. The answer to the carbohydrate question is to consume them in moderation as part of a diet that contains foods from all the recommended groups.



AIR FORCE WINS 2002 ARMED FORCES RUGBY CHAMPIONSHIP

The United States Air Force Rugby Team flew through the competition at the 2002 Armed Forces Rugby Tournament, 9–11 Oct 02, Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri, on the way to taking this year's championship under the leadership of Team Captain MSgt Ryan Gates (United States Air Force Academy) and Team Vice Captain Maj Dan Lockert (Scott AFB) and the coaching of Lt Col Larry Grant (MacDill AFB), Maj Pete Peterson (Tinker AFB), and CMSgt Craun Fansler (Ramstein AB). A stifling, stinging defense punctuated by big hits kept the other four Service teams (Navy, Coast Guard, Marines, and Army) to a total of 36 points against the Air Force. Meanwhile, the Air Force reeled off 187 points to easily take the championship.

The Air Force Tournament most valuable forward was **2Lt Brian Haws**, and the most valuable back was **1Lt Matt Carmody** (Travis AFB).

Fifteen players were selected from among the five Services to the All-Tournament Team. These 15 players each received a special coin and will be members of the 28-player Armed Forces Team that will compete in the 2002 U.S. National All Star Championships, 6–8 Dec, Tampa, Florida. Air Force placed nine players on the All-Tournament First Fifteen:

2Lt Ryan Finnan **Loosehead Prop** (AFIT, Wright Patterson AFB)
SSgt Mark Chacon **Hooker** (Lackland AFB)
1Lt Joe Kennedy **Tighthead Prop** (Hanscom AFB)
2Lt Brian Haws **Lock** (McChord AFB)
2Lt John Eccles **Flanker** (Nellis AFB)
Capt Jarvis Baker **Flanker** (Peterson AFB)
1Lt Matt Carmody **Flyhalf** (Travis AFB)
SrA Stanley Iakopo **Wing** (Hickam AFB)
SrA Jay Arbizu **Fullback** (Lackland AFB)

Air Force placed three additional players on the 28-player Armed Forces Team that will compete in the 2002 U.S. National All Star Championships:

Capt James Gherdovich . . **Scrumhalf** (Peterson AFB)
MSgt Ryan Gates **Wing** (USAF)
Capt Ben Trautwein **Center** (Eglin AFB)

The Head Coach and Assistant Coach for the Armed Forces Team to the U.S. National All Star Championships is **Lt Col Larry Grant, Air Force**, and **CDR Don Sheehan, Navy**, respectively. (continued on page 4)



No Ephedra in Air Force fitness centers

Ephedra, the latest supplement to surge in popularity among dieters, athletes, and general health enthusiasts, is being removed from all Air Force fitness center resale operations. The Air Force Surgeon General has strongly discouraged the use of nutritional supplements containing Ephedra “by all USAF personnel as an operational risk management measure” due to significant health risks associated with the product.

Also known as ma huang, Ephedra contains the active ingredient Ephedrine, which stimulates the central nervous system, sometimes to dangerous levels. This stimulant, found in over-the-counter decongestants and allergy medications, is also a key element in energy-boosting sports supplements and appetite suppressants. Research has convincingly shown that taken in high doses, Ephedrine can cause headaches, nervousness, high heart rates, irregular heartbeat, increased blood pressure, dehydration, seizures, strokes, and even heart attacks. Examples of products containing Ephedra are Ripped



Force, Ripped Fuel, Ultra Ripped capsules, Ripped to the Max, and Speed Stack. Many supplements contain not just Ephedra, but one or more additional stimulants, such as caffeine (listed as “guarana” or “kola nut”), which greatly increase the risk.

Individuals considering the use of any product containing Ephedra should be cautious if any of the following conditions exist:

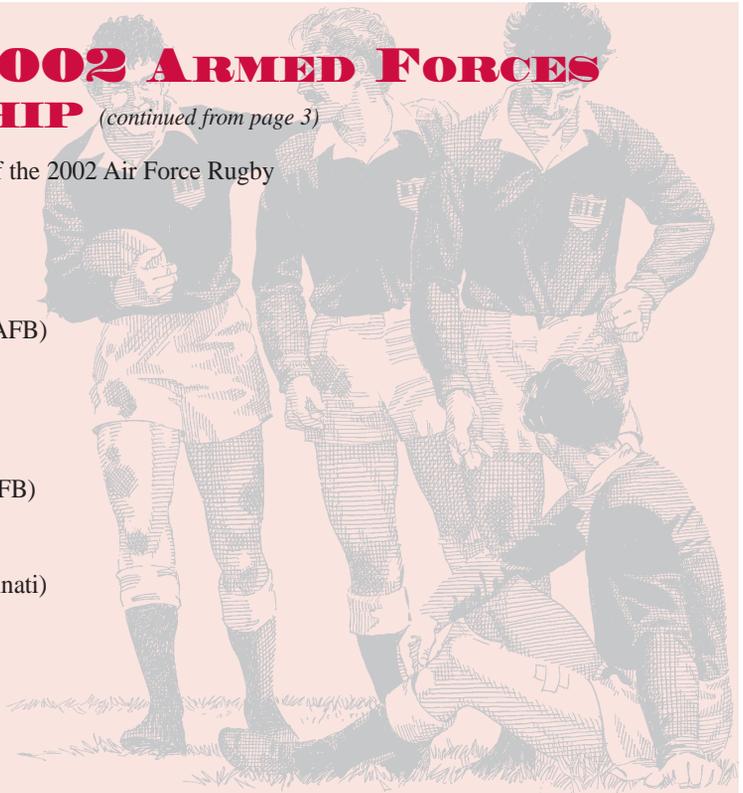
- ▶ Performing high levels of physical activity
- ▶ Exercising in extreme temperatures
- ▶ Dehydration
- ▶ Fever
- ▶ Use of other over-the-counter medications and/or supplements
- ▶ Tobacco and/or caffeine use
- ▶ Pregnancy
- ▶ Diabetes
- ▶ High blood pressure
- ▶ Presence of cardiovascular disease

The recommended alternative to the high risks associated with Ephedra supplements is to eat a healthy diet and maintain a regular exercise program. It is a winning formula with no adverse side effects.

AIR FORCE WINS 2002 ARMED FORCES RUGBY CHAMPIONSHIP (continued from page 3)

Other players and major contributors to the success of the 2002 Air Force Rugby Team included the following:

- SSgt Jeremy Allen** **Prop** (Tinker AFB)
- Capt Jay Gregson** **Prop** (Quito, Ecuador)
- Capt Louis Ruscetta** **Hooker** (Wright-Patterson AFB)
- SSgt Charles Martin** **Hooker** (Hurlburt AFB)
- 2Lt Wayne Kinsel** **Lock** (Grand Forks AFB)
- Maj Dave Durbin** **Lock** (MacDill AFB)
- 1Lt Cloud Richards** **Flanker** (Holloman AFB)
- SSgt James Westerdale** . . . **Flanker** (Davis Monthan AFB)
- Capt Wayne Altom** **8 Man** (Peterson AFB)
- 1Lt Jimmy Martello** **8 Man** (Barksdale AFB)
- 1Lt Andy McQuade** **Scrumhalf** (Univ. of Cincinnati)
- SrA Marty Martinez** **Flyhalf** (Spangdahlem AB)
- Capt Billy Nelson** **Center** (Hurlburt AFB)
- Capt Chuck Jones** **Center** (Ramstein AB)
- SSgt Don Zuehlke** **Center** (Ft. Gordon)
- SSgt David Stapp** **Wing** (Keesler AFB)



SCALE STUCK?

You know the feeling. You've been on a successful weight-loss program for several weeks, and you've been doing great. But one day you step on the scale and something is wrong—you haven't lost any weight. You wait a few days and try again. Still no loss. You kick your scale.

Rather than beat on your scale, it's best to take a good look at what has slowed your weight loss. You need to diagnose the cause of your plateau.

After the first few weeks of a change in diet, what often happens is that your body begins to adjust to the lowered caloric intake. This means that the number of calories that was helping you to lose weight a few weeks back is now helping you to sustain your present weight. There are two ways to battle this problem:

- lowering your caloric intake
- increasing your amount or intensity of exercise

One thing you don't want to do is overreact. Many people respond to a weight-loss plateau by drastically decreasing their food intake. That is a mistake for two reasons. First, you may not get all the nutrients and vitamins you need from the food you're eating. Second, you can't possibly continue to eat this way and sustain the weight loss.

Others go overboard with exercise by working out several times a day. However, most people who do this can't give their exercise programs the time or energy required and may actually sideline themselves with overuse injuries.

The best solution is to do a little of both. Reducing your caloric intake slightly and aiming for a half hour of exercise each day is a reasonable plan. As time goes by and you become more fit, you should be able to exercise a little longer or with more intensity. Think variety in both diet and exercise, and think healthy and fit. Focusing on these goals rather than simply focusing on the scale should help you beat those diet plateaus and reach the fitness level you desire.



TREATING MUSCLE INJURIES

Whenever you injure yourself while playing a sport or working out, immediate treatment is important.

Appropriate and prompt treatment may even speed your recovery time and help the injured muscle heal more completely.

Most experts agree that the best way to handle soft-tissue complaints—including muscle tears, strains, and pulls—is to use the RICER method of treatment. RICER stands for Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation, and Referral. However, even before beginning RICER, it's important to stop what you're doing and assess the injury. Examine the injured area carefully, and take precautions to avoid injuring it further.

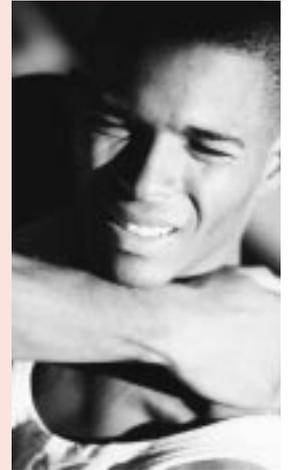
Begin treatment immediately by following the RICER method.

- **Rest**—This means that you stop using the injured body part and keep it immobile. In some cases, this may require the use of a bandage or sling.
- **Ice**—Apply cold to the injured area using a cold pack, ice in a plastic bag, frozen vegetables, or cold water. Apply the ice for up to 20 minutes at a time, every few hours, for the next two days or more.

- **Compression**—When muscle injuries occur, often there is bleeding under the skin. Using compression on the area can lessen the bleeding and the accompanying swelling. Use a compression bandage on the area if possible, and wrap it from above the injury to below it.
- **Elevation**—If possible, the injured area should be elevated above the heart to lessen the bleeding and inflammation.

- **Referral**—Depending on the injury, referral to a physician, physical therapist, or other specialist may be necessary to diagnose the exact nature of the problem and provide appropriate treatment.

In addition to following RICER, be sure to avoid heating the area during the first several days after the injury. Avoid hot tubs, heating pads, and saunas until the injury has begun to heal.



Winter workouts

Oftentimes, people who stick to their workout schedules most of the year find themselves slacking off a little during the winter. Why is that?

Well, those who like to exercise in the great outdoors may find it's a bit too nippy for them outside. In addition, the cooler weather often coincides with darker days, which can have a negative effect on energy levels. Once the cold, darkness, and lack of energy tempts one to skip a workout, it can be twice as hard to get started again.

The good news is that you don't have to lose your motivation just because the thermometer drops a few degrees. There are places where you can work out in warmth. By coming inside, you can stick to your exercise schedule and enjoy some workout activities that will help you keep your mood and energy level up to par.

In addition, spicing up your workout with some variety can also help keep your interest high even when the temperature is low. Try a new class or vary your lifting routine. Start working out with a buddy or two.

When the sun does grace us with its presence, be sure to get outside for a while. Getting as much sunlight and bright indoor light as possible during the darker months can help improve your mood and give you energy. This will help you stick to your workout routine and stay healthy no matter what the weather.

CANCER AND OBESITY—

Is there a connection?

New research suggests that obesity (even mild obesity) may increase cancer risk more than we think. It is believed that the activities of cancer cells, which release hormones and other chemicals, may influence cell division and growth in a way that makes conditions favorable for cancer growth.

These same researchers have recommended healthier diets and regular exercise to help significantly reduce the risk of some cancers. Diets high in fat and processed foods are discouraged, as is a sedentary lifestyle.

Instead, a diet high in fresh fruits and vegetables and recently prepared foods is recommended. One's diet should be balanced, but certain foods should be limited, including foods high in fat,

red meats, very salty foods, and alcohol. A high intake of fruits and vegetables is encouraged.

Regular physical activity is also an excellent idea. Working out for a half hour or more at least five times per week can help keep the body working properly and control weight. Body weight should be kept at an optimum level if possible.

For more information on ways to develop a healthier lifestyle, talk to us. We'll be happy to talk to you about a diet and exercise program that can point you toward a longer, healthier life.



TRAIN UP A CHILD

Childhood obesity becoming epidemic

In spite of a great deal of discussion in recent years about the effects of poor nutrition and a sedentary lifestyle on our youngsters, the number of obese children continues to grow. While the jury is still out on how much heredity plays a factor in childhood obesity, it is a known fact that obese children have an increased chance of becoming obese adults.

NEGATIVE SELF-IMAGE

Children who are much heavier than their peers are bound to suffer the psychosocial effects of being different. Rejection from adults may occur as well. In addition to problems with self-confidence, there are a number of physical problems associated with childhood obesity, which can further ostracize the child.



PHYSICAL EFFECTS

Being overweight puts children at a health risk as well as at risk for teasing. Health problems that are related to obesity in children include diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, and pressure on joints.

TURNING THE TABLES

The exact number of children who are obese isn't known, but estimates run as high as 25 percent. Changing those numbers does not mean putting all those children on treadmills and crash diets. A comprehensive approach to this problem involves developing good eating and exercise habits from a young age.

GOOD EATIN'

The emphasis should be on learning healthy

eating habits rather than on eating to lose weight. In fact, it's generally not recommended that children lose weight. Rather, they are encouraged to maintain their current weight as they grow. Parents should serve nutritious, low-fat meals and snacks. Give children small portions and let them ask for more rather than loading their plates and expecting them to finish everything. Help your children to learn when their appetites have been satisfied rather than encouraging them to overeat.

GOOD HABITS

Parents can set a good example for their children by exercising regularly themselves. Children tend to learn from what they see and develop habits similar to their parents'. Aerobic exercise for 30 minutes or more at least three times per week can help children grow into healthier adults. The benefits of exercise go way beyond weight loss; they encompass circulatory fitness, strength, and overall well-being. Discourage sedentary activities in favor of more energetic ones. Riding a bike or playing ball is far more preferable to watching TV or playing computer games.

START EARLY

Preventing childhood obesity is a favored approach. Even very young children can take part in exercise programs that they enjoy and from which they can reap benefits. Talk to us about how you can help your child develop healthy habits that could last a lifetime.

USAF FITNESS AND SPORTS

is edited by the USAF Fitness and Sports Branch, Directorate of Programs, HQ Air Force Services Agency, and published by Newsletters, Ink. Corp. The purpose of this newsletter is to offer practical information that can be helpful in the pursuit of good health and physical fitness. It is not intended to give specific medical advice. Such should be obtained from a base health provider. The mention or appearance of nonfederal entities, commercial vendors, and/or their logos neither implies nor constitutes federal endorsement of the organization, products, or services. Reproduction of this publication is authorized. Send comments/suggestions to **USAF Fitness, HQ AFSVA/SVPAF, 10100 Reunion Place, Suite 402, San Antonio, TX 78216-4138** or call (210) 652-7021/4454 or DSN 487-7021/4454. E-mail correspondence can be sent to **Tammy.DeCoux@agency.afsv.af.mil**.

USAF
SERVICES
Combat Support & Community Service