

# Healthy U @ Work

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FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

Mental Health, Sunflower Seeds	2
Healthy Comfort Food	3
How to Fit Fitness in Every Day	4
Stress and Solutions for Physical Pain	5
Ask the Trainer: Working Out with a Busy Schedule	6

 **Franciscan**  
**WORKING** Well

## Be a Volunteer

Volunteering is not only rewarding, it is healthy for you physically, mentally and emotionally. Volunteering connects you to others and to something you value, whether it is raising money for an important charity or helping at a local animal shelter. Volunteering also has many health benefits, including stress reduction and increased socialization. In fact, a study by Carnegie Mellon University in June 2013 found that people who volunteered on a regular basis were less likely to develop hypertension, a leading cause of heart disease. Volunteering can be done at any age. Many schools and scout groups participate in volunteer activities, a great way for children to develop gratitude and compassion. Even the elderly can benefit from volunteering; elderly volunteers had a 44% lower mortality rate than non-volunteers.

If you are ready to start, check out opportunities in your own community. Local municipalities often work with organizations that help those in need in the community. If you are active in your church, ask about outreach opportunities. Some organizations focus on the needs of those outside of the United States, including projects such as the building of schools, AIDS education and relief, and clean water projects in Africa and the Caribbean. Whatever your interest, there are people and places that would benefit from your help.



Many workplaces offer volunteer opportunities that reflect the company's values. These opportunities also help to create a culture of compassion and team building. If your workplace doesn't currently offer any volunteer opportunities, consider offering to organize one.

No matter where or how you choose to volunteer, the simple act of putting another's needs before your own is a step that benefits others and you!



## Mental Health

What is mental health? In general, mental health means “emotional, psychological, and social well-being” (U.S. Health and Human Services). There are a number of factors that impact mental health: physical health, genetic predispositions, and life experiences (especially those that cause trauma).

Here are some things you can consider to promote mental health:

- Being connected to family and/or friends can improve both mental and physical health. Spend time building relationships with those who care for you and support you.
- Eating a healthy diet, getting regular exercise, and sleeping 7-8 hours a night can help with both physical and mental health.
- Regular relaxation is a frequently overlooked piece in complete wellness. It is a necessary component to physical health and to mental health. Take time to unwind with a book, some music, take a walk, or play a game.
- Deep breathing exercises are a great way to calm the nervous system and quiet the mind. Touch the tip of your tongue to the space where your top teeth meet the roof of your mouth. Exhale completely through your mouth making an audible sound (a whoosh). Close your mouth and inhale gently through your nose for a count of 4. Hold your breath for count of 7. Exhale loudly for a count of 8. Repeat 4-7-8 breathing pattern 5 times.

*Continued on page 3.*

## Produce of the Month SUNFLOWER SEEDS

Though commonly seen as a garnish on salads, sunflower seeds are a versatile seed with a variety of health benefits! They are a great source of Vitamin E, magnesium, and selenium, offering anti-inflammatory benefits and cardiovascular benefits! Eating sunflower seeds is associated with lower blood pressure, reduced asthma symptoms, and reduced risk for migraine headaches.

**The Basics:** Sunflower seeds are sold prepackaged and in bulk containers. If you choose to buy from bulk containers, inspect the seeds for mold and freshness. The seeds sold in sealed bags will have an expiration date on them to ensure freshness. If you buy prepackages seeds, raw and unsalted are best. Remember to remove the black outer shells if they are still intact. Sunflower seeds should be stored in a cool place and out of direct sunlight. They can be frozen. When ready to use, just open the bag and prepare according to recipe!

**Try This:** Sunflower seeds can be added to your favorite bread or muffin recipe. Try coarsely chopped seeds on oatmeal, chicken or egg salad, or steamed vegetables, such as green beans or asparagus. Make your own trail mix with your favorite nuts, sunflower seeds, and golden raisins!

**The Facts:** A quarter cup of sunflower seeds contains about 200 calories, is a good source of healthy fat and Vitamin E, and is very low in sodium.

## Healthy Comfort Food

Temperatures are dropping and nothing sounds better than a hot plate of comfort food! Many of those delicious foods are off limits, due to too much salt, saturated fat, refined carbohydrates, and sugar. So, what are we to do? Make a few changes to the recipe and enjoy!

- Use less butter and cheese when you add pureed cauliflower to home-made macaroni and cheese for extra creaminess without the calories!
- Choose lean meat options to replace meats with higher fat content: ground turkey or chicken meatloaf, sirloin for stew, or fish tacos!
- Add mushrooms, zucchini, and carrots to lasagna instead of ground beef.
- Broth-based soups and whole-grain breads instead of cream soups and white bread.
- Baked apples with cinnamon and a sprinkle of sugar make a great dessert!
- Replace salt with herbs and spices for flavor without the added sodium.



There is no need to eat food that is boring. Make a few healthy changes and enjoy the comfort foods that taste best this fall and winter!



·2 bananas ·2 eggs ·½ cup rolled oats ·½ tsp baking powder ·pinch of salt

Combine all ingredients in blender until smooth. Allow batter to stand for 10-20 minutes until thickened slightly. Bring a non-stick frying pan to medium heat. Cook spoonfuls of the batter until golden brown on both sides. Serve with grass-fed butter and a drizzle of pure maple syrup; or mix it up and top your banana pancake with almond butter and cinnamon for a low-sugar, protein-packed breakfast.

## Mental Health *Continued from page 2.*

Consider what you can do each day to improve your total wellness.

Mental health conditions are treated as a disease or disorder and can require therapy, medication, and sometimes hospitalization. For most individuals, lifestyle changes that promote physical health, therapy, and medication can help to control or eliminate symptoms. If you are suffering from depression, anxiety, or you are experiencing any other concerning symptoms, contact your doctor right away and schedule an appointment. If you are having thoughts about doing harm to yourself or others, call 911 immediately. Help is available and recovery is possible.

# How to Fit Fitness in Every Day

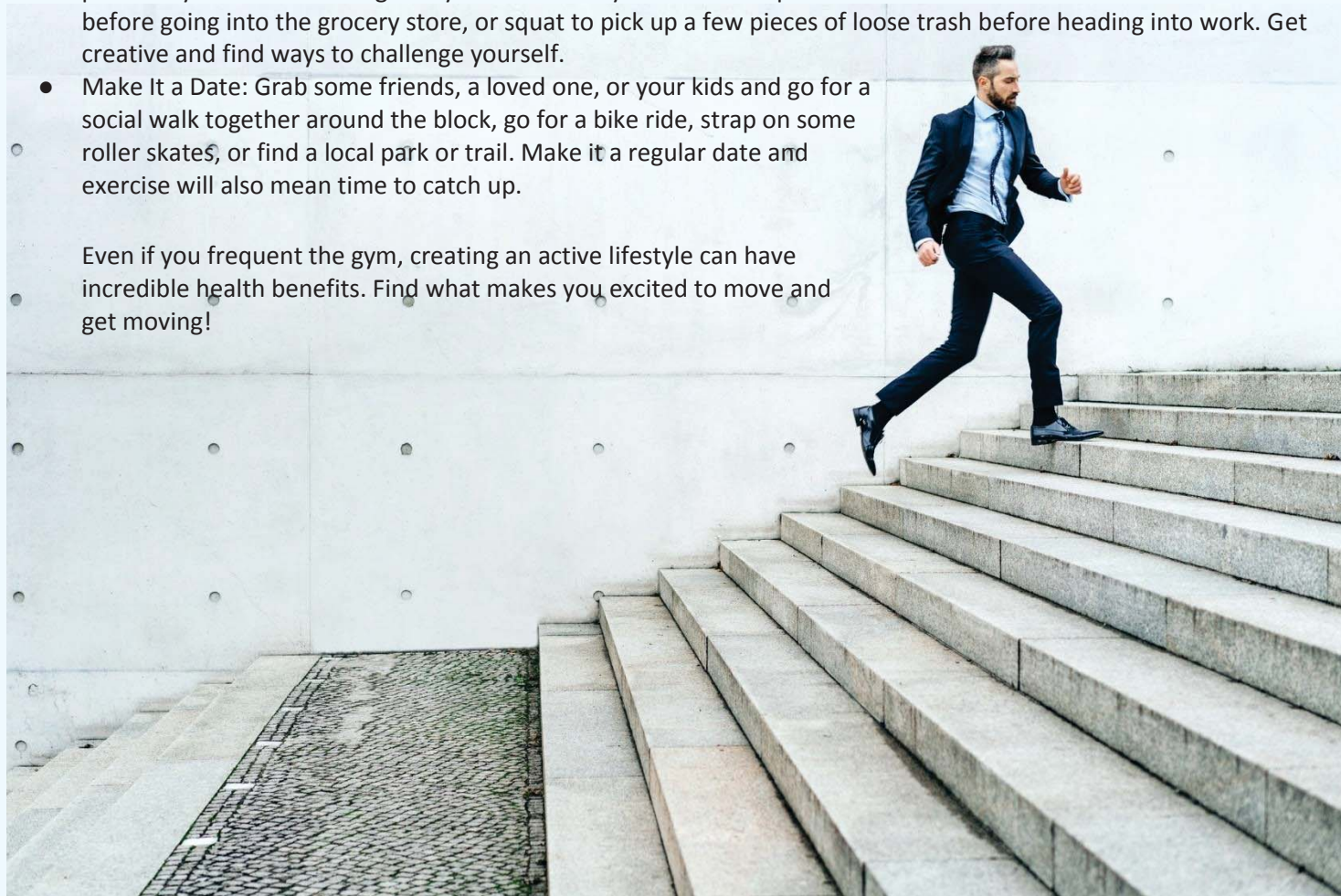
By LeeAnn Wilcox

How do I get stronger, lose weight, and become healthier *without* going to the gym?

Here are some ways you can fit fitness into your daily routine:

- **Exercise While You Wait:** Waiting for a document to copy or print? On a conference call? Brushing your teeth or heating your meal? Execute a simple exercise as you wait, such as calf raises, squats, or inclined pushups or planks on a stable surface. See how many repetitions you can get in this time, and see if you can beat that number next time.
- **Make Inactive Time, Active Time:** Sure, you could sit on the couch and watch a television show, or you can use those commercial breaks to do an easy exercise like sit-ups, leg raises, or some free weight arm exercises. Grab a book or audiobook and enjoy a story or professional development while pedaling a stationary bike. If you can do an activity during an inactive time, go for it; it will add up!
- **Make It a Game:** Grab a deck of cards and assign each suit an exercise. When that card comes up, do as many repetitions as the card says for the exercise assigned to that suit. Assign certain exercises to different sayings or actions of your favorite show or movie and execute the exercise every time the saying or action happens. Or you can simply start a basketball, volleyball, kickball, or football game with some friends. Just because it's exercise, doesn't mean it can't be fun!
- **Level Up:** Park farther away from your destination and walk the rest of the way; take the stairs instead of the elevator; walk around the building or block before going in; take a few extra moments to add in some activity. It may only take an additional two minutes, but those two minutes could add up to 20 by the end of the day.
- **Raise the Stakes:** Already take the stairs? Try taking them two at a time for an extra strength challenge. Already park away from the building? Do your community a service and push some of the loose carts back into the corral before going into the grocery store, or squat to pick up a few pieces of loose trash before heading into work. Get creative and find ways to challenge yourself.
- **Make It a Date:** Grab some friends, a loved one, or your kids and go for a social walk together around the block, go for a bike ride, strap on some roller skates, or find a local park or trail. Make it a regular date and exercise will also mean time to catch up.

Even if you frequent the gym, creating an active lifestyle can have incredible health benefits. Find what makes you excited to move and get moving!



# Stress and Solutions for Physical Pain

A message from your Healthy U @ Work Wellness Champion:

Pamela Johnson, BS, HHP-AADP, CFMP, RYT



For many of us, we are entering a stressful time of year and as we are pulled in so many directions our physical bodies may be screaming for attention. You may rely on a great workout or relaxing yoga class to release and recharge, but for those who have injuries or chronic pain aggravated by stress, there are a number of therapies that might help.

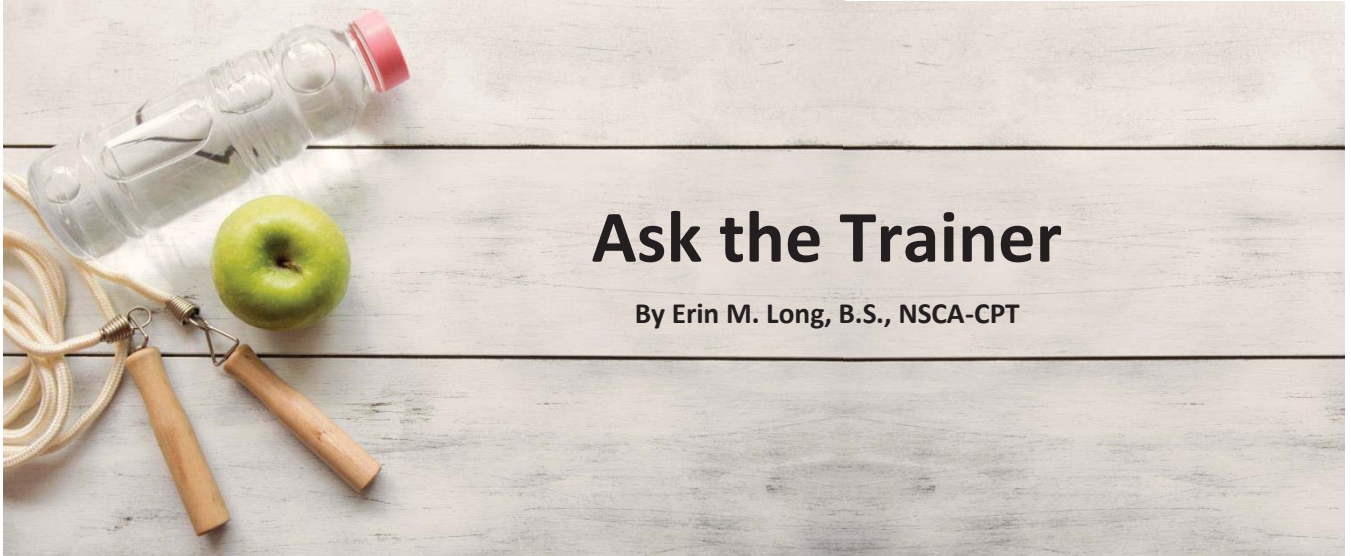
For example, if you are suffering from chronic back pain, the culprit could be more than just a rotated pelvis, alignment issue or disc degeneration. Often discomfort begins with the soft tissue holding in the internal organs. Practitioners can work with neuromuscular stress to find where the chain begins to break down and then release, layer by layer, all the way to organ and joint attachments. The following are several therapies that may be of interest:

- **Neural Manipulation (NM):** Identifies local nerve restrictions and fixation while examining their effects on the rest of the body. Like Muscle Activation Technique, which activates muscles that are not firing, NM reestablishes communication with the body. It is based on the discovery that any trauma to the body elicits a reaction from the entire nervous system. It works with release through manual therapy for the peripheral nerves and cranial nerves. Jean-Pierre Barral, an osteopath and registered physical therapist from France, developed this technique.
- **Manual Articular Approach (MAA):** Integrates all aspects of the joint including the nerve, artery, bone, capsule, ligaments, organs and emotional connections. The therapy works with soft tissue mobilization of bones, working to find the source of pain. (1)
- **Cranial-Sacral Therapy:** A gentle, noninvasive form of bodywork that addresses the bones of the head, spinal column and sacrum. The goal is to release compression in those areas, which alleviates stress and pain. (2)
- **Advanced Muscle Integration Technique (AMIT):** Focuses on the interrelationships between muscle function, range of motion, and restriction that contributes to pain. When tissues and muscles take over to protect an injured site, this adaptation "locks" into your neurology. This leads to altered or adapted movement patterns. The therapy alters how you move and use your body, while it takes stress off the injured muscle, allowing it to heal quickly. (3)

*For more information:*

1. <http://www.barralinstitute.com/therapies/nm.php>
2. <https://www.upledger.com/therapies/index.php>
3. <http://fitness.mercola.com/sites/fitness/archive/2013/01/04/advanced-muscle-integration-technique.aspx>





# Ask the Trainer

By Erin M. Long, B.S., NSCA-CPT

**Q:** Hi Erin. I am a single mother of two and work full time so finding time to workout between work and the boys after school activities is hard. Do you have any suggestions on how to fit in workouts on a super busy schedule?

-Lisa M., 45

Hi Lisa, thank you for reaching out. Being a single mom isn't easy, so I completely understand it being hard to find time to workout. I do have a few suggestions that may help.

**A:** First, try scheduling it into your week. Look at your schedule and see when you could fit something in, even if it's just a 30-minute walk at lunch or during one of the boys after school activities. Maybe it would be easier to try to get up 30 minutes earlier during the week and get a quick workout in. You can get an amazing workout in 30 minutes; you don't always have to do the 45-60 minutes that is often recommended. If your weeks are busier, focus on short, effective workouts and save the longer workouts for the weekend when you have some extra time.

If you are still struggling to find 30 minutes, let's try for 10-15 minute increments during the day. If you have a 10-minute break, maybe get up and do some squats or, if you have stairs at work, climb a few flights. Another suggestion would be to incorporate exercises while doing different activities such as cleaning the house or watching your favorite show at night. If you are cleaning your house, you could do lunges while vacuuming or squats while doing dishes. If you are watching a show, get up during those commercial breaks and do some jumping jacks or pushups. Sometimes we have to be creative in order to get exercise in. Just adding extra movement into your day will help with your energy level and make you feel better. Remember doing something is better than doing nothing!

Dedicated to your success,

Erin M Long

**Want to Know More?** Contact Working Well for more information on wellness programs and how they can help you reduce healthcare costs and improve employee wellness.



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