

# 4 LIFE FITNESS NEWS

Heart Health | More Rewards Prizes | Stretch Update

## Newsletter

- "This is Your Heart on Exercise."
- Update on the Stretch classes.
- The "Fuzz" Speech Video.
- Why Heart Rate Matters.

## Birthdays

A Very Happy Birthday to:

Barbara Cook - Feb 1

## New Members

### WANTED:

Fun loving adults 50 or older who are looking for the perfect fitness community. Where they can enjoy safe and age-appropriate workouts with expert instructors so they can reach or surpass all of their fitness goals. Who want to hang out with the most delightful members and the most experienced personal trainers no matter which type of training they choose.

*Members, if you have friends who might be interested, please pass on our info!*

## American Heart Month

*Be My Valentine*



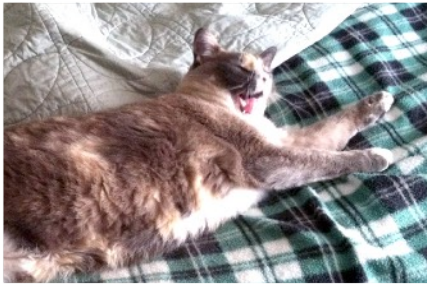
## This is Your Heart on Exercise

February is not only a time to celebrate Valentine's Day. It's also a time to honor your marvelous human heart. It's a fist-sized, hard-working, muscular organ which lies in the center of your chest, tilted slightly to the left that will beat 100,000 times today.

American Heart Month was first designated in 1964 and proclaimed by President Lyndon B. Johnson. The goal of the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association (AHA/ASA) was to educate people about the number one cause of death in both men and women: cardiovascular disease (CVD). CVD is a class of diseases that involve the heart and blood vessels and includes heart attacks and strokes. In the U.S. alone, it claims over a half a million people every year. That's 1 in every 4 deaths. And CVD is the leading cause of death around the world. By 2030, it's estimated that 23.6 million people globally will succumb to this disease.

The bright side of these frightening statistics is regular exercise is proving to be the single most important key to heart health. Something to think about the next time you plan on skipping class! But to be fair, regular exercise is just one of the habits we are urged to include in a heart healthy lifestyle. Other healthy habits include: quit smoking (including e-cigarettes), maintain a healthy weight, eat healthy foods (avoiding trans fats), reduce sodium intake, reduce stress, get 7 to 9 hours of sleep, manage any health conditions (especially high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes), avoid long periods of sitting, and exercise at least 30 minutes most days of the week at a minimum.

*(continued on page 3)*



## What our cats can teach us about stretching!

If you're serious about staying mobile well into your senior years, then you'll need to make time for stretching. There is a fantastic video on YouTube called [The "Fuzz" Speech](#) by Gil Hedley. He talks about fascia and what happens to it when we don't stretch.

Please be aware the video is a bit graphic since he shows small sections of human cadavers. But even if you can't watch, listen to what he has to say. His reasons for why we need to stretch are very compelling.

## Why Heart Rate Matters

First, what is considered a normal heart? For years it has been 60-100 beats per minutes. But now there are some experts who feel a resting heart rate should be closer to 50-70 beats per minute.

Heart rates respond to many things. How hard we exercise or move, medications, disease and overall health, fitness levels, and stresses.

What you want is for your heart rate or rhythm to be fairly regular. Since the heart circulates oxygen and nutrient-rich blood throughout the body, you want the system to perform regularly. A heart rate that doesn't allow for optimal circulation will be a problem. If you feel like your heart rate is not regular, be sure to consult with your health care professional.



## Updates on Stretch Class

Normally Joy's the Stretch Classes are a combination of:

- Static Stretching - where you hold a stretch for a set time.
- Dynamic Stretching - where you stretch while moving.
- PNF (Proprioceptive Neuromuscular Facilitation) - where you use a stretch, contract, relax sequence.

These assortment of stretches are done in multiple combinations of standing, floor, and/or using a chair.

Joy will still use these multiple combinations, but she will also add some one-minute holds on the static stretches. The idea is that the longer stretch times allow a large tight muscle to properly lengthen and hold the stretch for longer. Members who have been in a class using this new timing say the longer hold times definitely gives them a more lasting stretch.

For those of you who are not yet not convinced that stretching is beneficial, consider this:

Stretching helps improve your range-of-motion and flexibility. This means overall you'll be able to move more freely and with less resistance. That can improve your energy throughout the day.

It also helps prevent injuries because tight muscles are more likely to be pulled or torn. Better flexibility will also delay the onset of stiffness do to regular aging.

Tight muscles contribute to muscle imbalances that create wear and tear on the joints leading to painful arthritis. Muscle imbalances can also be a significant problem in poor posture.

Stretching is a great way to help feel more relaxed, calming the mind as well as relaxing the muscles and giving you a feeling of completing your task.

**Stretch Classes are 30-minutes and live on Wednesdays 12:30-1:00pm. Or find them in the video library.**

*(This is Your Heart on Exercise, continued from page 1)*

So why is exercise so good for the heart? Believe it or not, science hasn't figured it out completely. But, enough great studies and observations have been done to prove there are huge benefits to our heart and our whole circulatory system when we exercise regularly.

To appreciate the benefits of exercise on the heart, it's important to remember that the heart is absolutely essential for our body's overall health and function. The heart, complete with its own electrical system, pumps blood in and out through its four chambers. It carries vital oxygen and nutrients through the circulatory system to feed the 1.5 trillion cells that make up our organs and tissues. (Everywhere but to our corneas.) Amazingly the heart weighs in at only around 7 to 15 ounces. But everyday it pumps around 2,000 gallons of blood through 60,000 miles of blood vessels. And remember, this is non-stop, 24/7, every... single...day!

The heart itself is made of muscle tissue. And, just like resistance training helps strengthen our skeletal muscles, aerobic exercise and resistance training helps strengthen the heart and improve its function. As the heart gets stronger, its stroke volume improves. That's mainly because of the left ventricle. And this is good because the job of the left ventricle is to pump oxygen-rich blood out to the body's general circulation. So when your left ventricle can hold more blood, the heart becomes more efficient at moving larger volumes of blood while beating less often. It also means the vascular system (all 60,000 miles) is able to move more blood because it's more relaxed from being used and not stiff from plaque buildup from being under used. Where you start to notice these improvements is tracking your blood pressure.

As you exercise and your muscles and lungs need more blood and oxygen, your blood pressure (BP) will actually increase. Most noticeable the systolic pressure. This is the top number and lets you know how much pressure the blood is exerting against the artery walls when the heart is pumping blood out that left ventricle. This rise will be proportional to how hard you are working. But it is only temporary. Two to three hours after exercise elevated BP begins to drop. Over the long run with continued exercise, blood pressure levels will actually lower at rest throughout the day. These changes may be fairly minor in people with an already normal BP but someone with an elevated blood pressure could have more significant changes.

And, these benefits aren't reserved for the young. The heart healthy benefits from exercise can be experienced at any age. Even if you have not been active for many years.\*\*

As the trainers at Agile 4 Life Fitness see it, exercise shouldn't be seen as a luxury. It's actually the smartest health care interventions you can make. That it happens to be fun, makes you feel better, look younger, boosts your energy, clears your mind and allows you to hang out with some of the nicest people you'll ever meet, well that's just an added benefit. Happy Heart *Health Month* everyone!

For more articles about exercising see *Articles on Health & Fitness for Seniors* in the Content Library in [Agile4LifeFitness.PunchPass.com](https://Agile4LifeFitness.PunchPass.com).

\*\*If you haven't been exercising regularly, please check with your doctor or health care provider before starting any new exercise program.

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*If you have any topic(s) you'd like to see highlighted in the monthly **4 Life Fitness News**, please don't hesitate to send Joy an email. I love hearing from you.*

*Please share our newsletter with your friends or family.*

