



Timely Information for Personal Success

Avoid the Nation's Leading Killer

By *Tim Lencki*

Every 34 seconds, someone dies from heart disease in the United States. In fact, heart disease accounts for over one-quarter of all deaths in the U.S. Not surprisingly, this makes it the leading cause of death for both men and women. Moreover, it's projected that heart disease costs more than \$304 billion in health care services, medications, and lost productivity.

Although heart disease kills more people than any other disease, it can be prevented with healthy lifestyle choices. If you already have a form of heart disease, you can live a healthier and more active life by learning more about your disease and making better life choices. February, American Heart Month, is an ideal time to start making better decisions about your health.

It's true that there are risk factors for heart disease that you don't have any control over, such as age, gender, and family history. However, there are many areas that you *do* have control over, including your level of activity, nutritional habits, smoking, weight, and stress.

Adopting healthy lifestyle choices can also reduce your risk for the complications associated with heart disease, such as heart attack, stroke, and cardiac arrest. The following are habits to consider:

☑ **Exercise and be active:** A sedentary lifestyle is one of the leading contributors to heart disease. Statistics show that inactive people are twice as likely to develop heart disease. Exercise will help control blood pressure, cholesterol, and improve the function of your heart. As a result, even moderate, regular physical activity will reduce the risk of heart attack or stroke. Be sure to include all three exercise components into your routine: stretching, strength training, and aerobic activity. If you're unsure how to get started, a certified personal trainer can help.

☑ **Eat healthy:** Nutrition plays an important role in protecting your heart from disease. However, understanding what, and how much to eat can be challenging. Consequently, it's always best to consult with a nutritionist or dietician to determine the best diet for you. General guidelines include eating plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains,

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Exercising with Heart Disease

#1 — Stop exercising if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- > Pain or pressure in your chest, neck, arm, jaw, or shoulder;
- > Dizziness or nausea;
- > Shortness of breath;
- > Extreme fatigue;
- > Racing heart rate; and/or
- > Indigestion or heartburn.

#2 — Be cautious about starting an exercise program. Always contact a doctor first. A physician will also be able to tell you how any medications may affect your ability to exercise.

#3 — Listen to your body when exercising. Expect a mild degree of discomfort with any exercise program, especially strengthening exercises. This is

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Healthy Recipe: Power Salad

INGREDIENTS:

- 6 cups prepared salad
- 1 cup shredded carrots
- 2 Tablespoons red onion, chopped
- 1/4 cup creamy ranch dressing
- 10 cherry tomatoes
- 4 slices roast turkey breast, cut up (3 oz.)
- 2 slices reduced-fat Swiss cheese, cut up (2 oz.)

DIRECTIONS:

- 1 Toss salad, carrots, onion, and dressing in a large bowl until coated. Divide between 2 plates.
- 2 Arrange tomatoes, turkey, and cheese on top of the salad.

Serving size: 2, about 4 cups each

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Calories per serving: 180
- Protein: 21 g.
- Carbohydrates: 19 g.
- Sodium: 757 mg.
- Fat: 4 g.
- Fiber: 6 g.



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Questions and Answers

Heartburn and Sleep Addressed

Q: Can you get heartburn when you run? What should I do if this happens?

A: Scientists have confirmed that vigorous exercise, especially running, can cause heartburn, even if you haven't eaten recently. Running induces more reflux (backwash of stomach acids into your esophagus) because of the stomach agitation involved with the "up and down" jarring movements associated with running. About 10% of Americans experience chronic indigestion — meaning nearly every day.

As far as what to do — the best advice might be to avoid running and opt for bicycling, swimming, or another activity with less "jarring." On the other hand, you may have simply eaten too close to your workout — so wait at least an hour or more next time, and see if that does the trick.

Q: How can getting more sleep help you lose weight?

A: Research has shown that lack of sleep can disrupt a number of hormonal and metabolic processes. Partial sleep deprivation can also increase appetite. Get 7-8 hours of sleep each night, and lose some weight!

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and limiting the amounts of saturated fats, trans fats, and salt. Select sources of protein such as lean meat, poultry, and fish. In addition, fish has high Omega-3 fatty acids, which can reduce triglyceride levels. Finally, eating in moderation is also recommended.

Manage your weight: Being overweight increases the risk of heart disease. Losing even a few pounds through proper nutritional habits and exercise can lower your risk.

Stop smoking: Smoking is the #1 preventable cause of death. No amount of smoking is safe. Quitting is one of the best ways to reduce the risk for heart disease and its complications.

Reduce stress: Relaxation and various stress-reduction techniques can be effective in preventing or controlling heart disease. They include deep breathing and muscle relaxation exercises, meditation, yoga, and massage therapy.

Summary

It's never too late to start making healthy lifestyle choices. Start making the right decisions today! ❖

*Tim Lencki, MS, CSCS, is a strength and conditioning specialist and author of "Fitness One Day at a Time." Visit Tim's website at www.thefitnesseducator.com. **Editor's note:** The advice presented in this article is for educational purposes only and should not be construed as a substitute for medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Consult a physician regarding the applicability of recommendations appearing in this article.*

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perfectly normal. However, if the discomfort lasts longer than a couple of days, you probably overdid it. In this case, give yourself some extra rest, and take it a little easier during the next exercise session. ❖

Source: Strength and conditioning specialist Tim Lencki. Tim is also the author of a new bookette® series for active lifestyles available from Impact Publications, including "How to Exercise with Heart Disease." For more information, contact Tim at tim@thefitnesseducator.com or call Impact at (800) 350-4422.

