

## **The Amazing Sunlight/Exercise Combination**

Exercise and sunlight as two separate entities are both essential for good health.

What significance does exercise have in healthy living? Exercising daily is important to maintain physical, emotional, mental, social, and spiritual health. Exercise alone is good, no doubt, but let us talk about why exercising out in the sun is better. Why do I think it is important to encourage exercise outdoors in the sun?

The environment indoors is far from the healthiest to exercise in or for that matter to perform most activities in. So long as the air outside is fresh and pollution-free, the outdoor environment is ideal for exercise. Apart from the energizing and nourishing aspect of sunshine on our fiber, it also emotionally charges us and serves to invigorate the mind. It is no surprise then that in late winter a lot of people go into depressed states and suffer from what is often referred to as cabin fever or more appropriately Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD).

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), also known as winter depression or winter blues, is a mood disorder in which people who have normal mental health throughout most of the year experience depressive symptoms in the winter or, less frequently, in the summer, spring or autumn, repeatedly, year after year. In the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV), SAD is not a unique mood disorder, but is 'a specifier of major depression'.

During those long winter days when isolated indoors, the body fails to receive the much required (and often on a subconscious level - craved) sunshine and predisposes one to SAD. The only cure, relief and mode of prevention can be found in sunlight (limited though it may be). The amount of sunshine each person needs depends on each person's body and constitution. Accordingly, the length of time required must differ. The essential thing is to get as much of the nourishing sun during these periods as possible.

### **The significance of exercise**

Coming back to the significance of exercise, as we all know, exercise involves motion and motion is natural, all animals move, and so must we. Staying glued to a place for long periods is unhealthy. You need to get out and move about. Exercise is what gives your muscles tone and

strength and keeps your weight in check, curbs your anxiety and works as a remarkable antidepressant.

Exercise stimulates cognitive function. Exercise can radically prevent or delay the deterioration of mental faculties as age progresses especially in the late years. It boosts circulation all over the body and the brain tissue is not exempted from the blood flood. Exercise is an absolute energizing experience. Opiate-like hormones called *endorphins* and *encephalins*, known to be released during exercise contribute to the exercise high, that feel-good factor associated with exercise when done regularly. The rhythmic breathing and collective consciousness during exercise can also be a spiritually uplifting experience. We now realize that a healthy diet, good hygiene and clean environment alone cannot and do not ensure good health; exercise is just as vital.

### **The benefits of sunlight**

The benefits of sunlight, too, are incalculable. Without sunlight, bones cannot get calcified. Sunlight builds the immune system and increases oxygenation of the skin. It brings more blood to the skin surface which helps heal cuts, bruises and rashes. Open wounds and broken bones heal faster in sunlight. Sunlight improves eyesight and hormonal secretions.

### **It is best to exercise in sunlight**

But why is sunlight important during exercise? Why is exercising in the open sunshine preferable to indoor exercise?

Before we come to that, let us see why indoor exercise is the poorer choice.

People believe that gymnasiums are the most appropriate workout places being equipped with all the mechanical and electronic essentials in fitness management. However gyms prove to be more of a liability to health rather than an advantage. Gyms are often the perfect breeding grounds for noxious germs. In fact instead of getting those dream biceps you could get thoroughly undesirable, relentless infections.

If you fail to take necessary hygiene measures, going to the gym can turn out to be a major health hazard instead of a health benefit. Germs creep up everywhere, right from the exercise equipment you use to the spigot on the drinking water fountain and damp towels. Locker rooms are nothing but home-sweet-home to bacteria and fungi. The constant poor ventilation, warmth and moisture only superadded by the absence of sunlight, render the rooms pathogen-

friendly. Locker rooms in gyms are equivalent to what agar culture plates are in labs – media for colonies of bacteria!

You can efficiently prevent the unwanted colds and risks of contracting the dreadful athlete's foot, staphylococcal infections and other gym goer's germs by avoiding these places and embracing the outdoors instead.

### **Sunlight and testosterone**

In the male physiology, muscular development is linked to the production of the male hormone, testosterone. The old Greek practice of exercising nude on a warm sandy beach was used to develop a healthy muscular body. When sunlight falls on any part of the body, testosterone production increases substantially, but when it strikes the male genitals directly, secretion of the hormone is greatest.

Sunlight exposure has a dramatic impact on testosterone production in males, as plasma testosterone levels decline from November through April, and then rise steadily increase through the spring and summer until they peak in October. This directly impacts reproductive rates, and accordingly, the month of June has the highest rate of conception.

Those living in lower latitudes with generally lower precipitation rates have a year-round advantage in testosterone levels and the corresponding increase in sperm production. Indeed, the Caucasian movement from Europe into lower latitudes was followed by higher birth rates, which were partly due to the sunlight-induced testosterone levels.

A study at Boston State Hospital proved that ultraviolet light increases the level of testosterone by 120% when the chest or back is exposed to sunlight. The hormone, however, increases by a whopping 200% when genital skin is exposed to the sun!

Regular sunbathing increases the strength and size of all muscle groups in the male physique. The combination of sun and exercise is, therefore, ideal to develop a strong and healthy body with optimal reproductive abilities.

There are more than 40 million men in the U.S. suffering from low levels of testosterone. But the vast majority of them don't even know it. As the tremendous popularity of Viagra suggests, many of these men are experiencing symptoms of male sexual dysfunction. Others find themselves fighting more subtle battles against obesity, fatigue, depression and insomnia—common symptoms of low testosterone that most doctors overlook or attribute to the natural process of aging or stress. Testosterone levels reach a peak during a man's early twenties.

Aging and lifestyle factors such as stress, improper diet, physical inactivity, smoking, drinking and the use of prescription medications can significantly reduce these levels.

Standard laboratory tests have failed to pinpoint the problem. While medical science has determined that while a man's total (protein-bound) testosterone levels remain relatively stable over time, his bio-available (free) levels gradually decline at an alarming rate of 2% each year beginning at age thirty. This means that a man in his sixties is functioning with only about 40% of the testosterone he had in his twenties. However, when standard laboratory tests are performed, most men typically have only their total levels of testosterone evaluated. Their more important bio-available levels go unchecked.

To make matters worse, most physicians require a diagnosis of hypogonadism (a medical term used to classify total testosterone levels that fall below a specified laboratory limit) prior to prescribing any testosterone replacement medication. As a result, millions of American men who are suffering from symptoms of low testosterone are walking around undiagnosed and untreated.

Adequate exercise helps keep men feeling and looking fit by naturally stimulating testosterone release, and by preventing its breakdown. The duration, intensity and frequency of exercise all determine a man's levels of testosterone. Be aware that testosterone levels increase most with short, periodic, more intense activity. They decrease with prolonged, frequent activity. Studies show testosterone levels increase with 45 to 60 minutes of exercise. After this time, however, testosterone levels begin to decline. Healthy levels of testosterone are necessary for muscle growth and repair. Since frequent, extended training doesn't allow sufficient time for testosterone levels to recover, symptoms of over-training may develop. These symptoms include muscle soreness, diminished performance, fatigue, immune suppression and poor mood.

#### Guidelines for Increasing Muscle and Maximizing the Effects of Exercise on Testosterone:

- Focus on low-volume, high-intensity strength training.
- Limit your exercise sessions to 60 minutes or less.
- Exercise at high-intensity, no more than 2 or 3 times weekly.
- Do all aerobic exercise (except for warm-ups and cool-downs) on separate days (or at least at separate times during the day) from strength training.
- For optimum fitness, change your exercise regimen every eight to twelve weeks.

## **How women can benefit from sunlight**

Women, of course, benefit from sunlight, too. Their levels of female hormones rise when they are exposed to particularly one specific portion of UV light i.e. 290–340 nanometers (UV 🧐), which is assumed to be dangerous and useless.

Women who have only very little exposure to sunlight often suffer from menstrual problems or sometimes, have no menstrual periods at all. They can re-establish a healthy menstrual cycle by sunbathing regularly and spending several hours of the day outdoors. Normalization of the menstrual cycle can occur within a few weeks after starting sunlight therapy.

Infertility is associated with low vitamin D, and PMS can be completely reversed by addition of calcium, magnesium and vitamin D. Vitamin D supports production of estrogen in women. Menstrual migraine is also associated with low levels of vitamin D and calcium.

Given these findings, it may well be that constant lack of sun exposure, along with physical congestion, is the main cause of the increased infertility problems among the city populations in the world.

## **Sunlight and fertility**

If you do a little research, you will find that there is a long tradition of associating sunlight and mental and sexual health. The summer solstice, just for example has long be linked with fertility and sexuality around the globe. Whether it is the Maypole Dance or a June Wedding, there is nothing like planting and harvest time to get people to celebrate. The ancient Shamans used the warmer months to practice ancient fertility and sexuality rituals. Yes – summer and the hot sun have been studied by present day scientists all over again, only proving what the ancients already knew – that fertility and sex drive increase when sun shines brighter!

Less sunlight exposure puts our sex drive and fertility rates into slow drive. A decrease in female fertility in winter has long been documented. It has been an often investigated phenomenon even since the North Pole explorer Admiral Byrd's observations a century ago. His expedition reported that Eskimo women lacked menstruation, and thus ovulation, during the periods of 24 hour darkness in their winter.

As of today, the use and interest in light therapy has been widely explored as a treatment for infertility. Research on light therapy has suggested that our decreased exposure to natural sunlight reduces fertility. Apparently, being an office bee does nothing for ones fertility rate. The lighting in an office setting is much of much lower grade and intensity as compared to sunlight and lacks the full spectrum of sunlight. It is hardly any substitute.

Dr. Edmond Dewan John Rock Reproductive Clinic in Boston was among one of the first to use light therapy to treat infertile couples. Couples were given a specially designed light to keep on while they were asleep for three nights a month. The three nights were planned to be the same three days over which ovulation was expected to take place. The couples using the light therapy had a much higher rate of conception than those not using the light.

If you want to improve your sex life or fertility rates, rather than using one of the currently available costly treatments and risking your health due to their serious side effects, I would recommend that you first try the sun.

Sunlight therapy can also help those who suffer from high blood pressure.

(This is an excerpt from the book 'Heal Yourself with Sunlight' by Andreas Moritz)