

# #HEALTHYSARATOGA WORKPLACE WELLNESS GUIDE - VOLUME 7



## GET FIT- Your Health & Your Breath

By: Susan Cuda, Namaste Yoga

When you think of getting fit, does that thought involve a movement practice? Perhaps you see yourself at the gym, running, or maybe working out with a Crossfit DVD in the privacy of your home. Did the thought ever cross your mind to check in with your lungs first? Are you consistently taking healthy breaths? As a yoga teacher I look to the movement of chest & belly first when evaluating a private clients habits, deciding where we will begin. It is usually a discussion on proper breathing technique, because I find that many students breathe backwards! How can you possibly breathe backwards? Let's experiment: Bring your attention to your belly button and inhale. You may have noticed that you sucked your gut in on the inhale and release the belly on the exhale. That is backwards breathing. Try this instead: Inhale slowly through the nostrils and allow the belly to gently expand. Exhale slowly through the nostrils, gently & minimally draw belly button towards back bone as you release the breath. Did you notice a difference?



Most of us breathe from the chest – such shallow breathing sends a signal to the brain that all is not well—we are stressed. Alternatively, breathing from the abdomen boosts respiration, ensures a rich supply of oxygen to the brain and signals that all is well. Simply put, the more oxygen in your system the healthier you are. And fewer, slower, more consciousness breaths are the way to get there. Here are just a few of the benefits of breathing correctly:

Taking 5 minutes each morning and evening to practice slow conscious breaths will change old patterns that restrict a full deep inhale and complete exhale. This daily practice will lead you back to a relaxed state. When relaxed, you will feel more balanced mentally and physically. Also, you are more present and able to monitor your responses to life and change them when you begin to feel the old patterns of restriction reemerge. With the breath back in your control, you will be more likely to make healthy decisions based on awareness instead of responding from a stressed state. And best of all, with continued focus on a healthy breathing practice, you will have a new understanding of getting fit from the inside out.

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COUNTY IS ONE OF THE HEALTHIEST PLACES TO LIVE AND WORK.



# EAT FIT- Obesity: A Family Affair

By Lisa Hodgson, RD, CDE, Saratoga Hospital

According to The Centers for Disease Control (CDC), obesity continues to rise in both adults and children. More than 78 million Americans are obese. Children whose parents are obese are highly likely to be obese themselves. Obesity has been linked to the onset of chronic diseases including diabetes, heart disease and cancer. These conditions develop sooner in obese children and adolescents. Because the risk of obesity runs in families, it is important to get healthy together.

Here are some easy ways to get started:

1. Move more: Turn off the technology and turn on the activity. Take a walk at lunchtime. Go for a hike or bike ride on weekends and take the whole family along. Approach being active as fun and incorporate it into every day. Get creative!
2. Eat the Healthy Plate way: be sure to eat three small meals a day. Fill half of a small plate with fruits and vegetables,  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the plate with lean protein sources and  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the plate with a whole grain. Don't forget your serving of low-fat dairy at least twice a day.
3. Take off some weight: make small changes over time. Drink more water prior to meals, eat less food and choose healthy options more often. Move for at least 30 minutes a day.
4. Set goals you can meet: make a specific plan to make those changes. Schedule activity as you do appointments and other commitments. Plan healthy meals in advance and be specific. Work on small changes. Include family members in your plans.
5. Record your progress and keep at it: use an activity and food tracker or phone application to record your progress. Use a small notebook if you prefer. Look for areas to improve upon. Do not get discouraged, change takes time. Enlist friends and family members to provide support and encouragement.
6. Get help: seek out the assistance of a Registered Dietitian, the Nutrition expert, who will work with you to create an individual plan for success. Most hospitals employ outpatient Registered Dietitians for this purpose.



## LIVE FIT- Walkin'-the-Walk for Better Health

John Kettlewell, Saratoga PLAN

No time for the gym? No problem! Yes, in an ideal world we all should make time each day to head to the YMCA or join our favorite workout group, but none of us live in that ideal world. However, I know you eat, right? Grab your shopping bags and walk to the store. You can't load up the car worth so enjoy that walk two or three times a week, and remember you are working out at the same time—a healthy habit that does double duty. Shop local and you can walk from store to store while supporting your local community.

Drive to work—park further away and get in some extra steps each day. Better yet, ride a bike to work and enjoy your commute. If you work in an office building with an elevator—take the stairs instead. That's at least 10 rounds of stairmaster every week! If you are stuck at your desk for long periods—go for a walk at lunch time and bring a water bottle and healthy munchies you can eat along the way. I bet you can encourage some fellow workers to come along so you can walk-the-walk while talking-the-talk.

But, you have to drive the kids to soccer, so there is no time. Who says you have to watch the game from a folding chair on the sidelines? Maybe you can volunteer to be a coach or referee. Why not walk laps around the soccer field during the game?

Of course many of us like to go on hikes in nature, but the High Peaks are two hours away. Luckily, Saratoga County is blessed with over 200 miles of trails that include everything from a stroll on an urban trail, like Spring Run in Saratoga, to a mountain climb with a fire tower for fabulous views, like Spruce Mountain in Corinth. Check out the Explore section on PLAN's website for more information on great local walks and hikes: <http://www.saratogaplan.org/explore/>.



Exercise can become a healthy habit instead of a necessary chore. Walkin'-the-walk is a great way to get exercise that fits into your busy lifestyle.