

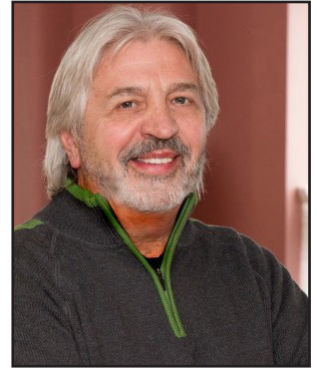


LIVE FIT - Reflect and Refresh

By: Pierre Zimmerman, One Roof Saratoga

We call ourselves human beings, but we might as well say we are “human doings”. Most of our time is spent in work projects, relationship management, and related details. Reflection allows exploring and discerning which thoughts and actions will contribute to the services that make the system flourish. Reflection provides a platform to redirect the focus for needed interventions to turn things around for the wellbeing of the individuals and the company they are associated with.

Meditation, a focus on emotional intelligence and mindful practices in the workplace, can create more balance between doing and being. Reflective awareness maintains integrity, commitment and alignment with the goals of the organization. Social competencies determine how we manage relationships, leverage diversity, influence and build a web of relationships, become change catalysts and enhance cooperation and team building.



About fifteen years ago as the executive director of a specialty hospital, I would invite staff to honor a minute of silence before starting meetings. At first people reacted, mostly behind closed doors while having their mental models challenged. But over time people were able to re-set their breath in a natural rhythm and their body and mind into a state of regulated functioning: calm abiding. It gave them time to reflect, to bring awareness to their emotions and figure how to proceed with the agenda items in a manner that provided more stability, flexibility, curiosity and coherence. Meetings became attractive and rewarding!

Reflection is important for understanding ourselves and others. It enhances efficiency and therefore outcomes are more productive. Victor Frankl, who survived many atrocities in concentration camps, was once asked how he was able to integrate the atrocities he witnessed. This was his response: “Between every stimuli and response there is a pause and in that pause lies freedom.” The pause is the refresh. We even have a bio-pause between every in-breath and out-breath. Frank figured out in the midst of exceptionally extreme conditions and an unsafe environment how to resource himself. We all need, in our daily busy lives, to call on ways that allow us to recharge our batteries and observe the world from a different perspective. These can include reflection, physical exercise, playtime, hobbies, artistic endeavors and volunteer activities. It is paused time that allows us to move beyond ourselves and embrace passionate activities for not only ourselves but also everyone’s benefit around us.

Kids are given a “time out” when they cannot stop unwholesome behavior or don’t know when to rest or move on to the next moment. We, as adults need to choose and determine a “down time” to replenish ourselves and become more resilient. Self care keeps us healthy and activates loving kindness for ourselves and non referential compassion for others.



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GET FIT - Move More

By: Amanda Duff, Saratoga County Public Health Services

We all know that exercise is important and good for us, so why is it that almost 80% of Americans don't get enough exercise? What is so hard about finding the time to 'move more'? Answering these questions can be complex. We may be rushing to and from meetings all day, stuck in front of a computer, and/or have physical conditions that limit movement. So how are we supposed to exercise more within our busy, complicated lives?

The first step toward increasing physical activity is making it a priority. Maybe you want to lose a couple pounds, be able to play longer with your kids, or release some job-related stress. Either way, recognizing that movement is essentially 'medicine' is step one. Exercise improves brain function, memory, mood, sleep, and overall fitness, while reducing risk of heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, and certain cancers. With all that in mind, how can we afford to not prioritize movement?

The next step is find opportunities within your daily routine to incorporate more movement. This doesn't necessarily mean going to a gym or running miles. Introducing more movement may mean sitting on an exercise ball at your desk, taking a walk during lunch, using the stairs, or parking a few spots down from where you usually do. If you are a competitive person, enter a walking challenge or if you need to be held accountable, choose a buddy to exercise with. Be creative and do what works for you!

Challenge yourself to move more, understand your health is a priority, and find simple ways to MOVE yourself toward a healthier lifestyle!



EAT FIT - Fresh Not Frozen

By: Julia Howard, Saratoga Farmers Market

Why visit farmers' markets in the colder months when the variety of seasonal produce is diminished and an abundance of frozen – often organic – fruit and vegetable options exist? One way to answer that question is to weigh the nutritional benefits of both. The answer is not as simple as you might think.

Supermarkets often feature "fresh-looking" produce. These items might have been picked several weeks before ripening to allow for transportation and distribution. Then, they tend to spend at least one to three days on display before being purchased and stored in people's refrigerators or on countertops for up to another week.

Farmers' markets also feature fresh produce. As often as possible, these foods are picked at the peak of their harvest. Rather than ripening via transport, they are brought immediately to market or stored in local farm facilities under conditions that maintain their peak flavor. These items are highest in flavor if eaten within a few days of purchase.

Shortly after being picked, fruits and vegetables start to lose moisture, become susceptible to spoilage and start to lose their nutrient value. Freezing such foods can slow the loss of nutrients. However, because many produce items are blanched before being frozen, they might end up losing some water-soluble nutrients. Frozen foods also tend to have more additives and preservatives.

Farmers might occasionally sell produce in the winter or spring that was frozen from the summer's harvest. However, increasingly, farmers harvesting more foods year round, with assistance from such season extenders as greenhouses, row covers, and high tunnels. They also are able to store other produce items such as potatoes, carrots, and turnips in conditions that mimic the ground where the roots form. Finally, they tend not to offer what's out of season – such as bell peppers in March – but to focus on what is of optimal ripeness now – kohlrabi, for instance, or butternut squashes sweetened from a slow curing. These tactics help make it possible to use farmers' markets as a source for obtaining seasonal, freshly harvested fruits and vegetables with the highest nutritional values for much of the year.

