



the CommonHealth Compass



Fitting in Fitness

January 1—March 31

The holidays left you with a few extra pounds and on January 1, you probably made some promises to yourself. You see the commercials promising you great results all packed into a little pill, magic serum, or easy 5-minute workout that anyone can do! It is hard to know what is best these days, but CommonHealth is here to help you figure it all out!

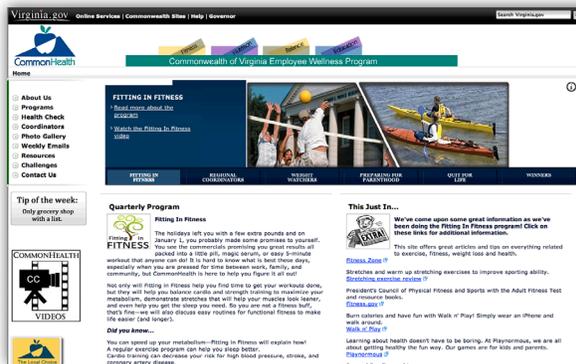
Fitting in Fitness will help you find time to get your workouts done. Plus it will help you balance cardio and strength training to maximize your metabolism, demonstrate stretches that will help your muscles look leaner, and even help you get the sleep you need.

Did you know ...

- You can speed up your metabolism—Fitting in Fitness will explain how!
- Strength training can improve the health of your bones and decrease your risk of injury.
- Flexibility exercises improve circulation, and decrease tension and stiffness.

Come to a CommonHealth Fitting in Fitness program. Participate through the video or coupon options to get details on these ideas and more. Learn strategies to fit in fitness—no matter how busy your schedule is! **Contact your Regional Coordinator today to schedule the program or go to www.commonhealth.virginia.gov.**

New Web Site, New Tools for a New and Improved You



The CommonHealth Web site has undergone a drastic facelift! It has a modern feel complete with tools to help you gather knowledge about wellness issues, participate in quarterly programs, and find out more about programs such as Weight Watchers,

Quit4Life, and Future Moms/Partners in Pregnancy. Visitors to the site can contact Regional Coordinators, view the health screening schedule and submit recipes and success stories. Take a few minutes to visit www.commonhealth.virginia.gov to see what an incredible tool it is!



Low-Fat Oven-Fried Paprika Chicken Cutlets

Ingredients

Cooking spray

½ cup plain fat-free yogurt

1 Tbsp paprika, sweet-variety, divided

15 saltine crackers, crushed into crumbs

1 tsp table salt

¼ tsp black pepper, freshly ground

Uncooked boneless, skinless chicken breast, four 4 oz thin pieces

1 Tbsp parsley, fresh, chopped

½ medium lemon(s), cut into 4 wedges

Instructions

Preheat broiler and coat a baking sheet with cooking spray.

Place yogurt and 1 teaspoon of paprika in a small shallow bowl; mix to combine. Combine cracker crumbs, salt, pepper and remaining 2 teaspoons of paprika on a large shallow pie plate; stir to combine. Place each chicken outlet in yogurt mixture and turn to coat. Next, place chicken in crumb mixture, turning to coat both sides and pressing lightly to make crumbs stick.

Place coated chicken on prepared baking sheet and lightly spray with cooking spray. Broil 3 to 4 inches from heat source until golden brown and cooked through, flipping once, about 4 to 5 minutes per side. To serve, sprinkle with parsley and garnish with lemon wedges. Yields 1 piece of chicken per serving.



Free Online Health Information in One Place!

How would you like to go to one Web site to track your exercise, send an e-mail to a nurse for help anytime 24 hours a day and look at the latest CommonHealth program on the Web? Now you can! There are new, free tools for each state health plan to help you manage your health by accessing what you need in one convenient place.

MyNurseOnline for COVA Care and COVA HDHP members has a nurse behind every program to give you the support you need to make important life changes. You can learn about conditions, set and track health goals, and even enroll online in the ConditionCare disease management and Future Moms prenatal programs. There's an online audio and video library, tools to check your Body Mass Index (BMI) calculation and access to a Symptom Checker.



MyLife MyPlan is an innovative health improvement program for COVA Connect members to help you take charge of your health. Easy-to-use information and services show you how to get started, stay motivated and exceed your health improvement goals. The program includes a personal health profile to assess your health and show areas for improvement, nutrition, fitness, screening programs and personal support from Health Coach teams. Customized support is available from a Life Coach for managing chronic illness. You can manage your prescription medications, track your BMI, weight, blood pressure and more. The Partners in Pregnancy prenatal program also is included.

Health education and wellness also are integral to the Kaiser Permanente HMO plan. Kaiser offers an extensive health education program through classes available to plan members at most medical centers. Kaiser members may also register on kp.org to access online wellness programs. These include health risk assessments, weight management, nutrition, stress management and smoking cessation.

Want more information? Visit www.commonhealth.virginia.gov.

Or contact your health plan:

COVA Care and COVA HDHP - www.anthem.com/COVA

COVA Connect - www.optimahealth.com/COVA

Kaiser Permanente HMO - <http://my.kaiserpermanente.org/mida/commonwealthofvirginia/>

Too Much of a Good Holiday = Time for Weight Watchers

So you want to lose some weight, especially after this holiday season. You have made your goal (or maybe you haven't even gotten that far), but how do you make it happen? As a state employee you can get a discounted price and even reimbursement for joining Weight Watchers if you are eligible for health benefits.

You have heard about the online and community meetings, but Weight Watchers at Work is really the most convenient for you; unfortunately, your agency is not currently participating. What can you do? Start the program! When you know you have enough employee interest (at least 20 employees), call 1-800-8-AT WORK (1-800-828-9675). A local At-Work Manager will help you.

Only state employees may attend an at-work meeting - no spouses, dependents or non-state employees. Participants pay in the meeting room by check or credit card. For more information, visit Weight Watchers on the DHRM Web site. What are you waiting for—get started today!

Know Your Numbers!

What is metabolism? We've all heard the term. But what does it mean?

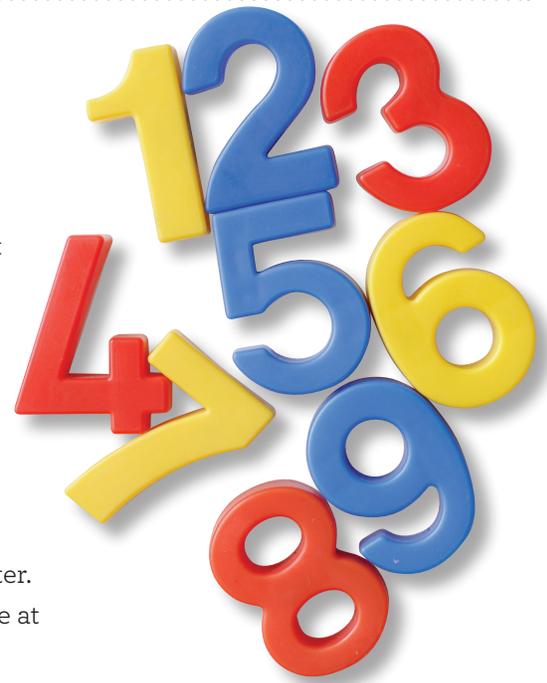
While metabolism is a complex series of chemical processes in the body, it is most commonly referred to as the rate at which your body burns calories. Many things affect an individual's metabolic rate, such as genetics, gender, weight and diet. One of the fastest and simplest ways to burn more calories and raise your metabolic rate is through exercise. To give your metabolism a boost, try these tips.

- Think Calories IN (carbs, fats, proteins - total caloric intake) vs. Calories OUT (exercise, lifestyle - your metabolic rate).
- Muscle burns up to 90 percent more calories than fat, so your metabolism stays revved up longer. Strength train!
- Cardio burns a high number of calories during the exercise and shortly after.
- Couple both aerobic exercise and strength training to be the most effective at maximizing your metabolism!

What is BMI?

Body mass index or BMI, is a measure of body fat based on height and weight. BMI gives many people a good idea of whether or not they are at a healthy weight. But, just like your weight, you should not let your BMI be your only measure of fitness. Not all adults who have a healthy BMI are at their most healthy weight. They may have a large amount of body fat but very little muscle, and some athletes encounter the opposite problem.

Combining exercise and healthy eating habits is the healthiest way to improve your weight, metabolism and BMI. Neither exercise nor healthy eating by themselves is as effective. Balance is key when it comes to managing your weight.



Mary Sue Kerr (center right) helps employees during a CommonHealth program.

A Rewarding Thing to Do

Mary Sue Kerr began her tenure as agency CommonHealth coordinator for the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center when the program first began. That was more than 20 years ago. She retired in January, beginning a new life phase and different routine.

What did she enjoy the most about being an agency coordinator?

"It's a good thing to help other people learn how to be healthy," she says. "And I feel that I know what needs to be done. That's been reinforced in the different meetings I have attended about the program."

"Being involved has also helped me personally to lead a better and healthier lifestyle. I have been able to put into practice what I have learned. For example, I try to get out and walk once a day or at lunchtime, and watch what I eat."

Mary Sue says one of the most important things for agency coordinators to focus on is communicating with employees, especially now that CommonHealth programs are quarterly and online.

"You have to try to figure out what will make them pay attention," she says. "Whether it is posters or persistent e-mails using 10 colors in bold print, you have to see what will stand out. Once a month, we have an activity at WWRC such as a staff picnic, staff Olympics or holiday brunch to get a bigger turnout. Food always helps!"

In addition to her service with CommonHealth, Mary Sue also has been a Weight Watchers coordinator. "I've enjoyed all the programs and the meetings, and being able to learn new things. "It's been a rewarding thing to do."

Bummed by the Winter Season? You're Not Alone.

According to the Mayo Clinic, "Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that occurs at the same time every year. If you're like most people with seasonal affective disorder, your symptoms start in the fall and may continue into the winter months, sapping your energy and making you feel moody. Less often, seasonal affective disorder causes depression in the spring or early summer."

NAMI describes the characteristics as "oversleeping, daytime fatigue, carbohydrate craving and weight gain, although a patient does not necessarily show these symptoms. Additionally, there are the usual features of depression, especially decreased sexual interest, lethargy, hopelessness, suicidal thoughts, lack of interest in normal activities, and social withdrawal."

Causes of SAD can be related to family history of depression, but some experts believe it is due to the lack of sunlight during winter, which can affect serotonin and melatonin levels. Treatment is typically a form of light therapy but may include medication, diet changes, stress management, and even visits to sunny destinations during these months. As the Mayo Clinic notes, "Don't brush off that yearly feeling as simply a case of the "winter blues" or a seasonal funk that you have to tough out on your own – you may have seasonal affective disorder."

For more information:

COVA Care - <https://www.achievesolutions.net/achievesolutions/en/covacare/Home.do>

COVA Connect - www.OptimaEAP.com.

Mom Was Right – Stand Up Straight!

We've got your back!

Almost every move you make involves your back, even sitting, yet over 80% of Americans will experience back pain at some point in their lives. The good news is you can strengthen and protect your back with several easy steps.

There are several ways to keep your back healthy:

- Be active. Back pain occurs more often in inactive people, so walk whenever you can.
- Maintain a healthy weight. Excess weight pulls and puts a strain on your back
- Sit and stand up straight. Keep your ears over your shoulders and shoulders over your hips.
- Wear supportive shoes. Heels throw you out of alignment.
- Lift correctly. Use a wide stance and hold the object close to your body. Lift with your legs.
- Stretch often to keep your muscles relaxed. Shrug your shoulders, and then let them drop.

It is easy to take your back for granted until it starts to hurt but a healthier back is possible. Stand tall, be strong and guard your back!



CommonHealth Web Site Offers Ideas for Healthy Living

- Quarterly programs.
- Healthy recipes.
- Wellness videos.
- Success stories from your colleagues.
- Fitness center discounts.

These resources and more can be found at your fingertips on the new and improved CommonHealth Web site. Visit www.commonhealth.virginia.gov today!

