

GOOD HEALTH TIMES

MAY 2016

Topic Review: **Irritable
Bowel Syndrome**

Exercise,
the greatest pill of all

Health Benefits
of ***Kale***


DR. MARK ROWE
A JOURNEY OF TRANSFORMATION

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Tip of the Month

Move more and sit less throughout your day.

If you don't move regularly, your metabolism slows as you become less sharp and more sluggish. A short trip to the water cooler or brisk walk at lunchtime, even standing up from your desk every 40 minutes or so to stretch out your legs or squat down to pick up something from the floor. All of these small, seemingly insignificant events add up to support your thinking, feeling and performing at your best, day in and day out.

Health Benefits of Kale

While the fibrous nature of kale leaves can be off putting, don't judge a book by the cover!

Kale is a rockstar among cruciferous vegetables, one of nature's true superfoods. It is a nutritional powerhouse, packed full of powerful health boosting and cancer preventing phytonutrients, flavonoids, and antioxidants which scavenge harmful free radicals from your body. Kale's anti-inflammatory capabilities are unrivalled among leafy greens, and it is an excellent source of vitamins A, C, E and K, fibre, calcium and iron. It contains lutein and zeaxanthin, which help protect your eyes from macular degeneration.

Just one cup of kale can beat a whole week's worth of other foods for nutritional value: more than 600% of the daily value of vitamin K, 200% of the suggested daily amount of vitamin A, and more than 130% of vitamin C (and even more vitamin C in the Scottish curly-leaf variety).

Kale is an excellent source of omega-3 fatty acids. These super-fats build cell membranes in your brain, help to regulate blood clotting and cholesterol levels, in addition to protecting you against heart disease and stroke. They may also strengthen the immune system to better fight autoimmune diseases, such as lupus and rheumatoid arthritis.

Kale is hardy, easy to grow and a great addition to the vegetable patch, providing leaves right through the winter and early spring. As with many vegetables, cooking kale reduces the effectiveness of several antioxidants and vitamins, which is why eating raw kale in salad or green smoothies can be so good for your health.

Thought of the Month:

"If you want to change your life, change your habits."

-Dr Mark Rowe

Dr Rowe's Healthy Green Smoothie

The freshest, fastest way to get your greens is in a smoothie. Try this easy healthy recipe for energy-boosting vitality and a powerful start to your day.

Ingredients:

- 1 Avocado
- 1 Bunch of kale
- 1 Bunch of spinach
- 2 Pears chopped (with skin on)
- Coconut Water
- A few ice cubes

Step 1

Chop up the pears with skin on, add the kale, avocado, spinach, ice cubes and coconut water.

Step 2

Whizz up in your blender and 'voila', a powerful green smoothie packed full of fibre, health boosting phytochemicals and antioxidants, vitamins and minerals. What a great way to improve your productivity and effectiveness over the course of the day!

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Exercise, the greatest pill of all

Your body was designed to move, and to move a lot! Primitive man was a hunter gatherer, in constant movement in the pursuit of food, as well as in the avoidance of predators. There were millennia of evolution to bring our bodies to the point where our brains, as well as our bodies put us firmly at the top of the food chain. Unfortunately, in the past century, our minds have taken centre stage and for many of us, the proper maintenance of our bodies has become an afterthought.



Too many of us live primarily sedentary lives, spending hours a day at desks, behind the wheel, and slouched in front of computers or TV screens. This behaviour is absolutely not without consequence, our bodies simply weren't designed to be idle.

Despite most people having a general understanding that exercise is beneficial, the penny really hasn't fully dropped yet. Most people still do not get enough exercise, they slip into routines that don't prioritise it, and live in denial as to the implications. In my experience even doctors can be guilty of this, and we are presented with the consequences of such behaviour on a daily basis.

Of course everyone is busy, and can find it almost impossible to find the time to dedicate to exercise. There are two reasons why rationalising it this way is

flawed. Firstly, exercise is so vital to wellbeing that it simply should take priority over many other activities. And secondly, the truth is that once a person engages with a routine of exercise, they will find that their performance will improve so much in the other aspects of their life that they are likely to have more time and not less! Put simply, avoiding exercise is a false economy, and I am dedicating this article to explaining just some of the many reasons why it is so important to all of us. It's never too late to reap the life-changing benefits of exercise, no matter how old you are or how unfit you feel right now.

Exercise: The Greatest Pill of All!

Regular exercise has a multitude of benefits, of course it makes you feel much better physically, but many people are amazed by just how positively it improves their sense of well-being. It boosts your energy levels, endurance and stamina, as well as sharpening your mind. Put simply; you can do more, do it better, do it for longer, and all the while feel happier while you are doing it. Of course you are likely to look a lot better as well, but trust me when I say that is the least of the profound improvements to your life and longevity offered by simple exercise, which is freely available to us all. Here are some more detailed motivations to get moving!



The Heart: Regular exercise strengthens your heart muscle, lowers blood pressure, and tends to thin the blood. As a result, it substantially reduces the risk of heart attack and stroke, even for those who already have heart disease.

Metabolism: Your metabolism is the rate at which your body burns calories and fat. Regular exercise stimulates it, so raising your heart rate each day can mean that you are burning fat, not only while you are exercising but for some time afterwards. Your body can become a fat burning machine even when you are sitting at your desk!

Cholesterol: You know those good and bad types of cholesterol you keep hearing about? Well exercise actually promotes the good (HDL), while reducing the bad (LDL), as well as lowering the fat that dissolves in your blood (triglycerides).

Diabetes: The risk of diabetes, which is quickly becoming a world-wide epidemic, is greatly reduced through regular exercise. For those with existing diabetes, exercise reduces the risk of complications and is a great tool for managing the condition.

Getting Older? Weight bearing exercise is particularly important as you get older and the muscles tend to diminish. It's not only the muscles however as weight bearing exercise promotes bone formation and delays bone loss, helping to prevent osteoporosis. In fact exercise slows the ageing process down, giving us great agency over how active we can be as we age.

Sex! Exercise is a great way to improve your sex life as it increases sex drive generally, as well as protecting men from erectile dysfunction and helping women with arousal.

Sleep. Exercise promotes sleep and is often the first recommendation for those who have some problems in this area. It is wise to avoid exercising late at night though, as all the lovely endorphins might keep you awake!

Take
5

FOR EXERCISE

1. Fitness
2. Flexibility
3. Feel fantastic
4. Fun times
5. For a healthier, happier YOU!

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Exercise and the Mind

People who exercise invariably report feeling happier, having more clarity of thought, feeling less stressed about managing life's challenges, and having much more robust coping mechanisms. Allow me to illuminate some of the technical reasons that make this a reality. First of all it reduces the levels of our bodies' natural stress hormones, such as cortisol and adrenaline, making it a powerful way to ward off feelings of anxiety or depression. It stimulates a number of brain endorphins, which are a kind of natural painkiller that allow us to feel calm, optimistic and energised. Of course they minimize the discomfort that can be associated with exercise itself but they also persist afterwards creating a pleasant, even mildly euphoric feeling. Exercise also causes the brain to release a substance called BDNF which behaves like miracle-grow for the brain. This has myriad effects including stress reduction, increased IQ and short-term memory, and improvement in reaction time, hand eye co-ordination, and spatial awareness. In addition to all this, exercise promotes the release of dopamine and serotonin, which enhance things like motivation and happiness respectively.

The upshot of all this is that exercise not only makes you faster, better, and stronger; but it also makes you happier and more resistant to ailments of both the body and the mind! The combined effects of all this can have an incredibly profound impact on your life. As you begin to feel and look better, you gain more confidence, more self-belief and mastery. It will spill into over into every aspect of your life improving your relationships, your career, and your enjoyment of life in general!

There are no rules when it comes to exercise, there are many ways to do it and you should always choose the method most suited to you. But there are some tips which can help you get over the initial challenge of making exercise habitual in your life.

- Keep a journal to keep track of your progress. Not only of the work that you do, but also the benefits you start to feel. This will be a useful motivator when you need it!
- Develop a program for yourself so that you have a plan, but don't punish yourself, or lose faith if you slip up, just soldier on.
- Prepare your work-out clothes before you go to bed at night. It's surprising how having this little task pre-accomplished can make the difference.
- Give yourself a target of persevering with your routine for two months, tell yourself that you can stop after that if you want. You won't want to!
- Choose specific blocks of time that you will dedicate to exercise, preferably at least 4 or 5 times a week.

Ask yourself the following questions in your exercise journal. These will help you trouble shoot your routine and find a process that is most suited to you. There can be some trial and error discovering your rhythm but there is a work-out available to everyone, you just have to find yours!

1. What are your exercise goals (short, medium and long term)? Write them down! Make yourself accountable.
2. What's the one thing you can do today to get you started?
3. What physical activities do you like most?
4. Can you make them part of your schedule? What programs best fit your schedule?
5. How can you adjust your schedule to make time for exercise?
6. Do you prefer to exercise alone or as part of a group?

Utilising the questions properly should help you discover your best route to success. Remember exercise can be challenging in the beginning but there is no reason it shouldn't soon become fun, position yourself to embrace what works best for you!

When you consider that by just committing a half hour a day or less to exercise, you can change your whole life in such a profound way, it really does seem like a no brainer! Live longer, feel happier, have better relationships, and empower yourself to chase your dreams, whatever they may be!

They say every journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. Take that first step today and I assure you, it might be the most important step you take in your life!



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Topic Review: Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)

This is a common condition affecting up to 1 in 5 people at some stage in their life. It usually first develops in young adults and teenagers and is twice as common in women as in men.

What are the symptoms of IBS?

- Pain and discomfort (often described as a spasm or colic) may occur from time to time in different parts of the tummy area (abdomen). Typically the pain eases when you pass stools (motions or faeces) or wind.
- Bloating and swelling of your tummy area and passing more wind than usual.
- Some people have bouts of diarrhoea, and some have bouts of constipation. Some people have urgency, which means you have to get to the toilet quickly.
- Sometimes the stools become small and pellet-like or watery or ribbon. At times, mucus may be mixed with the stools.

Passing blood is not a symptom of IBS. You should always tell a doctor if you pass blood.

Do I need any tests?

A doctor can usually diagnose IBS from the typical symptoms. Sometimes a blood sample is taken to help rule out other conditions such as inflammatory bowel or coeliac disease. If symptoms are not typical, or if you develop symptoms of IBS in later life (over the age of about 45) then other conditions need to be ruled out and referral for more complicated tests such as endoscopy (a look into the bowel with a special telescope) may be needed.

What causes Irritable Bowel Syndrome?

The cause is not clear. It may have something to do with overactivity of part or parts of the gut.

Many people with IBS can relate the start of symptoms to a stressful event in their life and note that symptoms worsen during times of stress or emotional upset.

Intolerance to certain foods may play a part in some cases, particularly processed foods.

Sometimes symptoms get worse after taking a course of antibiotics which can change the balance of bacteria in the gut (known as the microbiome.)

What are the treatments for irritable bowel syndrome?

Keep a food and lifestyle diary for a few weeks to monitor symptoms and activities. This may identify triggers, such as food, alcohol, or emotional stresses, and may show if exercise and other lifestyle factors help to ease or to prevent symptoms.

• ‘Let food be thy medicine, and medicine thy food.’ Eat at regular intervals, choose fresh foods (avoid processed). Probiotics are foods or nutritional supplements containing good bacteria which may help to counteract the impact of bad bacteria in causing IBS symptoms. Foods that contain probiotic bacteria include certain milk products and yogurts. Soluble fibre seems to help ease symptoms in some cases. Dietary sources of soluble fibre include oats, ispaghula (psyllium), nuts and seeds, some fruit and vegetables and pectins.

- Drink at least eight cups of fluid per day, especially water or other non-caffeinated drinks such as herbal teas. This helps to keep the faeces (stools) soft and easy to pass along the gut.
- Restrict tea and coffee to three cups per day (as caffeine may be a factor in some people).
- If you have diarrhoea, avoid sorbitol, an artificial sweetener found in sugar-free sweets (including chewing gum).

Regular exercise may help to ease symptoms; as can anything that reduces your level of stress or emotional upset.

Medication to treat spasm, constipation, or diarrhoea, antidepressant medicines or psychological treatments (talking treatments), may all be helpful. Promising newer treatments such as probiotics may be on the horizon.

