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DIRECTORY



A healthy home office

As more workers work remotely, local experts offer advice on equipment and setup needed for the best ergonomics

By Eileen Mozinski Schmidt
Special to The Freeman

The home office has become the new normal for many professionals.

But working from home can present challenges in setting up office space that is user friendly and ensures a good ergonomic setup for workers.

Where's the best place to start?

Get away from the couch or bed and set up your work station at a desk or table, said Adrienne Loukopoulos, an occupational therapist with Freedom Physical Therapy Services.

"Once you find a good table that you're going to work at, then you can build up from there," Loukopoulos said.

She recommended finding a chair that is adjustable, including arm rests that can be moved up and down.

"Ideally, at a desk, you want your feet flat on the floor," said Loukopoulos, who said if the

user's feet do not reach the floor, a foot rest or book can be used.

The aim is to have both knees and hips at 90 degree angles.

A chair with a good back rest is optimal, but a small pillow or a towel rolled up and placed between the lower back and chair can provide necessary lumbar support, according to Loukopoulos.

When working, keep shoulders upright and take breaks to pull shoulders down and take deep breaths, she said.

If using a phone, try to employ a headset or use a speaker phone function if possible, Loukopoulos said.

Computers with monitors are generally better for home office use than laptops because they allow for more adjustment, she said.

"Ideally, the top of the screen should be at eye level or slightly below," Loukopoulos said, adding that the keyboard and mouse should be posi-

tioned to avoid needing to reach far forward.

She recommended a pad or even a rolled up wash cloth to keep hard surfaces from pressing directly on the carpal tunnel area.

As workers log more hours than usual while working from home, Loukopoulos stressed that it is particularly important to take breaks every 20 to 30 minutes to stretch.

At Office Furniture Warehouse LLC, business owner Pat Walters said customers have been looking for comfortable work chairs and a variety of simple desks in recent months for home work and study.

"Some come in looking for the stand up desk. A lot don't like sitting all day," said Walters, who said customers are also searching for desks with adjustable computer monitor arm features in order to bring their computers to eye level.

Smaller items like floor mats and mouse pads supports



Submitted photo

An occupational therapist from Freedom Physical Therapy Services, S.C. helps in arranging an ergonomically correct desk setup. Adrienne Loukopoulos, an occupational therapist with Freedom Physical Therapy Services, said workers should try to keep arms and hips at 90 degree angles while at their desks.

have also been popular.

"We do expect it to continue for a long time," said Walters, of recent home office furniture trends.

Office Furniture Warehouse also works on business decommissions and Walters said many companies are clearing out of office spaces and are not renewing leases.

"They are figuring out working from home can work for a good part of their populations," he said.



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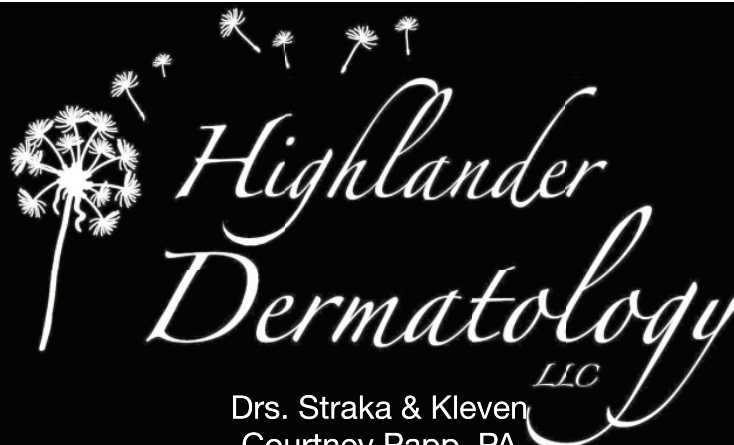
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Stress proofing your diet

What foods to consume, others to avoid

By Karen Stokes
Special to The Freeman

When you feel tense, stress eating seems to be an automatic response. Stress may increase your desire for doughnuts, candy, and other high-fat or sugary foods. You are likely to eat fewer regular healthy meals and fewer fruits and vegetables.

"It's so pertinent right now because the world we live in is very stressful. There are certain foods that you can eat more of which helps your body naturally to cope with stress. One thing is to increase your magnesium," said Missy Propper, certified nutrition and wellness and lifestyle coach at Authentic Wellness.

Almonds, spinach, cashews, peanuts, cereal, shredded wheat, edamame and dark chocolate are examples of foods rich in magnesium.

Propper suggests when you are craving chocolate it's okay to eat a little bit but you want to go for dark chocolate because

usually milk chocolate is full of sugar. If you can get a 70 or higher cacao percentage it's actually not bad for you, of course in moderation.

She also warns us that we need to shy away from sugar because that causes more stress in the body. Sugary foods do more harm and make you feel worse; an apple, banana or blueberries would be healthier.

"Blueberries are fabulous, it's a fruit that can give you the sweetness," said Propper. "It's really about finding healthy alternatives. You can find recipes for comfort foods like macaroni and cheese, but with cauliflower. You can make a cauliflower mac and cheese and it tastes phenomenal and you're not getting all that starch from the macaroni and starch processes like sugar in your body."

Susan Chen, APNP, Outreach Community Health Centers, offers ideas to help limit weight gain and increased glucose.



Submitted photo

When feeling stressed, it's important to incorporate healthy foods like fruits and vegetables into your diet.

- 1. Lower your stress.** Limit TV news watching to 20 minutes a day and decrease use of social media. Watch funny movies — laughing is a great way to reduce stress.
- 2. Get regular sleep and exercise.** Walking, dancing in the house, just moving is something.
- 3. Higher fiber, higher protein keeps you feeling fuller longer.**
- 4. Thirst.** Drink water

before you decide to eat or snack — it will also help you feel fuller.

5. Avoid any sugar drinks — soda, sweet tea, any drinks with high levels of sugar.

6. Snack on things healthier.

A healthy diet can help counter the impact of stress by strengthening the immune system and lowering blood pressure.

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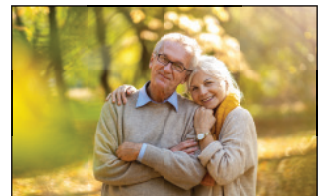
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Masked up and working out

A look at ways to exercise while wearing face coverings

By Eileen Mozinski Schmidt
Special to The Freeman

With masks more a part of day-to-day life, fitness-minded persons may be considering how to best incorporate face coverings into their workout routines.

There are several things to consider when working out while wearing a mask, said Ryan Bloor, owner and personal trainer at Right Body Fitness LLC in Waukesha.

He said to start with a focus on strength training.

"Strength training won't require quite as much breathing effort as cardio. We all need more strength for quality of life purposes anyway, so this is a good time to prioritize time with weights," he said.

In addition, he said a person can lower the intensity of a cardio routine if needed.

He said a "conversational" type cardio may be better than high intensity interval work when wearing a mask.

"This lower intensity car-

dio is actually better for stress relief as well, which many of us could use nowadays," he said.

Managing one's expectations is also helpful, Bloor said. "You aren't in worse shape because you are breathing heavier with a mask, you simply have a restriction that needs to be managed," he said. "Lower intensity and shorter duration for now isn't a bad thing. Keeping exercise a normal part of your routine is what matters most."

Jenna Derby, a personal trainer who works in the Waukesha area, agreed.

"Don't go in thinking you're going to do the exact same things. Just tone it down a little bit," she said, noting that masks can limit air flow.

"Start at a lower level and build up from there. Your body will get used to that."

Derby recommended opting for cloth masks, as surgical masks can become damp. Or, bring a second mask as a backup.



She added that masks can cause wearers to sweat more, making it especially important to stay hydrated when exercising.

For those who cannot wear a mask, Derby noted that Zoom workout sessions are offered by a variety of places and can provide a "really effective workout."

One aspect of exercise

remains constant, whether one dons a mask or not, Bloor said.

"In the end, exercise needs to get you out of your comfort zone, but not so uncomfortable that you hate it. When you hate it, you won't do it," he said.

"Being realistic and not feeling guilty for doing 'less' work is important for all of us right now."



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Take control of your health and relieve stress with yoga

Benefits include flexibility, muscle building and cardio

By Karen Stokes
Special to The Freeman

Almost any form of exercise or movement can increase your level of fitness and can decrease stress. Choose an activity that you enjoy. Whether it's walking, jogging, biking, kickboxing, dancing, gardening, weightlifting, swimming or yoga, staying active is the key.

Lou Ann Pitts has been doing yoga for 15 years and has a 200 hour yoga teacher certification.

"Yoga is the study of life, it's a lifelong journey to your true self. Trying to find your timeless sense of who you are. It calms your mind," Pitts said. "During the practice of yoga you are constantly brought back to paying attention to your body to connect with your healing in your body and what you're feeling in your body."

Pitts continued, "So for 30 minutes or an hour you're completely single-minded so when people are done they feel great

because they've been away from all their mind games. You're not letting your mind worry about what's for dinner or what bills are due, you get off the train for a while."

The whole yoga process can be considered a meditation. Yoga relieves stress due to the stillness it brings to your mind and body.

There are benefits to yoga — flexibility, muscle building and cardio. It improves your circulation and as you age it improves your balance.

Doing yoga at home can be cost effective and easy, no traffic or parking.

"You don't need a mat, you just need enough room to do a push-up. You want to wear stretchy or loose clothing, you can even wear pajamas, just not restrictive clothing. It's economical and you can use YouTube for free," said Pitts. "After a while you will notice improvement and in a while you will see increased strength and flexibility."

You can subscribe to Yoga with Lou Ann on YouTube.



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While many are working from home to stay fit, yoga can be comfortably done at your home using little space. Lou Ann Pitts, a certified yoga instructor, demonstrates how not much space is needed for yoga practice.

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