

Monterey County's Health Magazine

JANUARY 2020

HEALTH MATTERS

ISSUE

NEW YEAR NEW YOU

INSIDE:

You Should Be Dancing

Steps to Making a Change

Strategies for Winter Exercise

Pilates Group Provides Community

High-tech Window on NICU

& Much, Much More...



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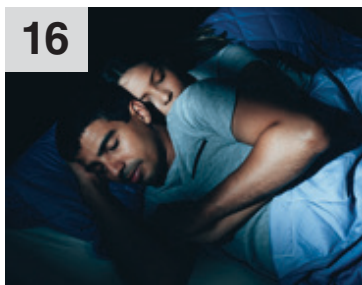


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Important Statistic

DID YOU KNOW?

- > New studies show that cigarette smoking among U.S. adults has reached an all-time low of 13.7 percent—a decline of approximately two-thirds in the last 50 years. However, one in seven Americans still smoke, and many use other types of tobacco products.

Reference: Centers for Disease Control, cdc.gov

New Year New You

I S S U E

Sharon Jackson, a Zumba dance exercise instructor at Monterey Sports Center, expects big classes in January when people are looking to make healthy changes in their lives.
Cover Photo by Randy Tunnell



Meet Emilia and Camilla

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Editor's Desk



Photo by Susan Gerbic

It's hard to believe it's 2020! It's a time to reflect on the past 12 months as well as establishing goals for ourselves in the new year.

Needless to say, the vast majority of us tend to make health-related resolutions—to eat better, to take care of ourselves, to exercise more or to drop a few pounds. In fact, according to the Nielsen survey folks, “staying fit and healthy” is Americans’ No. 1 vow for the new year, followed closely by “lose weight.”

It's never too late to make the most of your physical well-being, and now is a perfect time to start. The experts tell us not to expect to be perfect right away, and if you do set challenging physical goals for yourself, be sure to talk to your doctor about it, and then take small steps toward your ultimate destination.

Fitness goals are much easier to keep if you're having fun, so look for those activities that you enjoy, and it will be much easier to keep going. Our cover story this month gives an overview of the benefits of dance exercise, which in addition to the fun factor, is also an excellent workout for body and mind.

A new year with so many new possibilities—I hope you live it to its fullest.

Here's to your health!

Kathryn McKenzie

HEALTH+ MATTERS

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YOU SHOULD BE DANCING

ZUMBA, BALLROOM, BELLY DANCE ALL AID FITNESS AND BRAIN FUNCTION

BY KATHRYN MCKENZIE

YOU'D THINK I'd be better at something that I've done since high school. Yet it's always the same when I start up at a new dance fitness class: feeling like I have two left feet, and everyone's looking at me and judging. In reality, though, no one cares how good you look when you're doing Zumba, Jazzercise or any one of the many forms of dance exercise. The important thing is to move to the music, even if the exact steps escape you.

So it was recently when I went to my first Zumba class at the Prunedale Grange a few months ago. Led by Loretta Salinas, the class typically attracts between 20 and 25 people twice a week at this location, mainly female and middle-aged.

Salinas turns up the music—a upbeat, peppy selection ranging from disco to Spanish-language pop to Pitbull and Bruno Mars—and begins leading her students through the routines. Luckily, most are simple. But even if I'm unable to keep up, just walking in place is a fine alternative, until I catch on.

People are often scared of dance fitness classes because they feel self-conscious about making mistakes or looking foolish. But there is so much to love about anything that involves dance, plus there are enough

different types to try that you'll probably find something you like. And, truly, the other students aren't looking at you—they're too busy dancing.

Dance exercise fits into four different categories. We usually think of cardio or aerobic dance, which is what I prefer, but there is also social or ballroom dance; sensual classes like belly dance or pole dancing; and slower classes like barre workouts, inspired by ballet but with elements of Pilates and yoga.

But any dance class will improve your balance, get your heart pumping, and most of all, get you moving in a way that is pure fun. There's also new scientific evidence that dance also improves memory and brain function as we age (see sidebar).

I also am a regular at Jazzercise classes in Prunedale taught by Dede Wasylychyn, who has been an instructor for almost 34 years. "I do think Jazzercise has kept me younger," says Wasylychyn, 63. "You can do other kinds of dancing like line dance, but you're not going to get the upper body workout."

Jazzercise, a dance fitness franchise company founded in 1969, blends several different dance styles and also includes resistance through light weights and bands. Wasylychyn also incorporates lots of stretching into her sessions to help her students stay flexible as they age.

"I really see a difference in the people who come in to my classes" and stick with it, she says, in terms of losing weight and becoming more fit and toned.

But there are plenty of alternatives beyond Zumba and Jazzercise. Fran Spector Atkins, who founded SpectorDance more than 20 years ago, offers both an artistic dance program and dance fitness classes at her facility in Marina. "Not everything is about high-level dance as an art form," says Spector Atkins. "There's a lot of variety and diversity in what we offer."

On the SpectorDance online calendar, you'll find a wide range of dance classes aimed at all ages, including hip-hop, Zumba, American Tribal Style Belly Dance, adult ballet, and contemporary, which combines elements of ballet, modern and jazz dance. There's also Modern Horton Technique, a class specifically tailored to help address range of motion and physical limitations.

“

I'VE MADE LIFETIME FRIENDS THROUGH ZUMBA — THEY'LL BE WITH ME FOREVER.”

INSTRUCTOR
LORETTA SALINAS

Atkins' original training as an occupational therapist has influenced her philosophy of dance, she says, and she has seen how dance can help people with learning disabilities and youth with autism, something that her SpectorDance On-Site program takes into the community.

Leonid Sidorenko, co-owner of Pacific Grove Dance, says he has also witnessed first-hand how dance can help people with medical conditions. He has seen how two of his students, a couple with Parkinson's disease, are aided by dancing the tango.

"It decreases their tremors significantly," says Sidorenko. But he also notes that ballroom dance is more of a workout than people might think. "It's a fun way to lose weight and keep fit," he says. "It's really healthy, and it keeps your brain active," to remember the routines and to coordinate dancing with a partner.

Monterey Sports Center also offers a wide selection of group exercise sessions, with including Yoga Dance, Cardio Hula and yes, the ever-popular Zumba. Zumba instructor Sharon Jackson says she also teaches hip-hop and other dance exercise classes, "but Zumba is my favorite." "You can tailor the choreography to your classes, and I love that flexibility," she says.

Zumba instructor Salinas has loved dance since she was a girl. "I came from a traditional Latin family, and dance and music were always part of our celebrations," she says. She didn't get into dance for fitness, though, until after a doctor visit that revealed high blood pressure and cholesterol levels, which elevated her risk for stroke. Rather than take medication, she opted for exercise.



ZUMBA INSTRUCTOR SHARON JACKSON

Salinas discovered Zumba and began teaching it six years ago, and now her blood pressure has dropped to 110/70 and her cholesterol is in the normal range. In addition to exercising, she is eating a healthier diet.

"Now I'm about to turn 69, and I've never felt better," she says, and has energy to teach five days a week, which includes classes at the Active Seniors Center and the Police Activity League Armory in Salinas.

Her students agree. Janet Street, 86, travels all the way from Marina to take Salinas' classes in Prunedale, and she thinks dance keeps her young. "That's what I like, moving," says Street, a limber and active senior who is constantly on the go.

"It's a safe environment where you can express yourself," says Salinas. "It's a party. It's fun." And, in addition to being a stress reliever, high-intensity dance can burn between 600 and 800 calories an hour, she points out.

Salinas resident Ben Hanly, 81, is a regular at Zumba classes in Salinas and Prunedale, even though he's often the only male in the class. "It keeps you looking good," he says with a wink.

And dance is not just exercise—it's also a community. In the Prunedale Zumba class, for instance, members chat and form friendships, host dance parties and share life milestones with each other. "If we don't see someone at class for a while, we call and check up on them," says Street. "We're a family."

"I've made lifetime friends through Zumba—they'll be with me forever," says Salinas. ■

Health Matters editor Kathryn McKenzie, a former Monterey Herald staff writer, contributes to a variety of print publications and websites.

SpectorDance: spectordance.org

Pacific Grove Dance: www.shallwedancepg.com

Monterey Sports Center: Monterey.org/sportscenter

Arthur Murray Dance Studio of Monterey: arthurmurraymonterey.com

Jazzercise: jazzercise.com

MORE INFORMATION ON PAGE 28

OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS

Taking control of eating and her life through a Twelve-Step program

BY LISA CRAWFORD WATSON



IT ISN'T ALWAYS EASY to identify the trauma that launches someone into a life of compulsive behavior. Sometimes it occurs when the child is preverbal and has no words to describe it, or is too young to process it, or has buried it too deep to access the pain.

But Jody Mayfield knows. She was 12 years old when her mother committed suicide. And there were other things.

Mayfield was 8 years old when she got into baking. She loved creating baked goods, mostly because it ensured she'd get the food she craved—anything made with flour and sugar.

She could control neither the craving nor the quantity she consumed.

Mayfield was 20 when she began bingeing in earnest, characterized by eating way beyond the point of being full. It was frightening to feel so out of control. But worse was the fear she'd get fat. So she learned how to restrict her nutritious intake by drinking coffee. Lots of it.

"My weight got quite low," she said, "down to 114 at 5 foot 7. The obsession with my weight, with food, with restricting all of that, got worse over time. I believe I was trying to manage my weight, my life, myself, and I thought I was. I felt empowered in a 'Look at me; I'm losing weight' kind of way. Gradually I restricted my food intake more and more."

Mayfield was 29 when her brother, a recovering alcoholic, gave her a copy of the book explaining the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. Although she didn't have a drinking problem, she felt the book was describing her. It was the moment she thought, "I, too, am an addict. A food addict."

Mayfield also realized she'd hit bottom, emotionally and physically.

"I was basically bulimic," she said, "but there are different ways of being bulimic; most common is to binge and purge by vomiting. There are other ways to purge; one is excessive exercise. That wasn't my story either. I used coffee as a diet drug, and when I drank coffee, I didn't feel the need to eat. I lost weight, but it led to bingeing because I was depriving my body of necessary nutrition."

Mayfield harnessed her courage and joined the Monterey chapter of Overeaters Anonymous, a Twelve-Step fellowship program for men and women who meet to help solve the common problem of compulsive eating, which can lead to obesity, anorexia or bulimia. OA has members who are morbidly obese, severely underweight, and every weight range in between; people who maintain

occasional control over their eating behavior, and those completely unable to control their compulsive eating.

The introduction of the OA website reads "You are not alone any more. Welcome home." OA, like AA, is not a religion but a faith-based organization that fosters spiritual, emotional and physical recovery through the Twelve-Step program. It also requires complete abstinence from compulsive eating behaviors, and that members find a food program that works for them and enables them to maintain a healthy body weight.

"It took me quite a while to be willing to abstain from sugar and flour," says Mayfield, whose name has been changed to foster the anonymity that is part of Overeaters Anonymous. "I didn't get that for my first several years. People encouraged me to simply work the same 12 steps as AA or any Twelve-Step program, and the food would take care of itself. That was not my experience."

Mayfield has been working to abstain from flour and sugar for 31 years—but without relapses—but completely for the past five years. She attends one OA meeting a week in Monterey, supplemented by telephone meetings with up to 400 people on the call, from all over the world. Attending three to five meetings a week is quite common among the membership.

"Today if I were to eat sugar or flour, they'd get into my system and set up the phenomenon of craving," she says. "This takes up a lot of time and space in my head, distracting me from my life, where I'm living to eat instead of eating to live."

In recent years, Mayfield has seen an increase in OA membership, with more people who have recovered reaching out to those in need via iPhone and apps, resulting in an increase in recovery. OA doesn't work for everyone, she says. Those who find success work the 12 steps and are able to abstain from compulsive eating behavior. It works, she says, if you work it.

"I feel tremendous freedom in abstaining, and I don't miss those foods at all," says Mayfield. "In fact, I recoil from them as I would from a hot flame. That is what comes from working the 12 steps. If I simply abstained without that, I would eat them again, despite the havoc they created in my life." ■

Lisa Crawford Watson lives with her family on the Monterey Peninsula. She specializes in writing about art and architecture, health and lifestyle, and food and wine.

CONTINUE TO PAGE 30

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Dr. Pechak with his twin boys



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NO EXCUSES

Braving the bleak midwinter to work out all season

BY LISA CRAWFORD WATSON



TUCKED INTO THE SOFT warmth of your microfleece bedsheets, you are startled awake by an alarm you had the audacity to set, so you'd wake up in time to get in a morning workout before heading to the office. As you adjust your eyes to the dark, you assume or wish the clock were wrong since it feels less like morning and more like midnight.

As you tug on your thermal leggings, fleece top, microfiber jacket, reflective vest, moisture-wick gloves, and trail shoes, you wonder where you get the motivation to head out into 30-degree temps for a stealth run in the dark streets of your neighborhood. You have to really want it.

Sometimes you slip deeper into those soft sheets and skip it. But then you beat yourself up all day and vow to get in that run after work—when it will be dark and cold again.

Welcome to the winter of your workout discontent. If you really do have to wake up before the birds to get in your workout, you could mix up your neighborhood run with a trip to the gym, where the lights are on, and everybody knows your name. You could swim in an indoor pool or a lighted outdoor pool, which offers the promise of a soak in the steaming hot tub after.

Or you could craft an intense, efficient exercise routine in the comfort of your own home.

High-intensity interval training (HIIT) is a form of circuit training, which pairs cardiovascular and strength-building exercises by alternating short periods of intense anaerobic exercise with a less intense recovery period, pretty much until you've had enough. Actually, 20 minutes should do it.

HIIT is easy to do in an indoor setting, says athlete and physical therapist Amy Altshuler. You can put a yoga mat on the floor and do jumping jacks, burpees—drop to a squat with hands on the floor, kick feet back into a plank position, jump feet back into a squat, and jump to a standing position with arms in the air—plus push-ups, planks, sit-ups, lunges and running in place.

"Do your HIIT exercises like a circuit—10 repetitions of each activity, and then run through it again. After 20 minutes huffing and puffing," says Altshuler, "you've done your winter workout. You can add 3- to 5-pound dumbbells to the workout, particularly when doing squats and lunges, to get your heart rate up fast."

If you have stationery equipment at home—an exercise bike, elliptical machine, or treadmill—or have the opportunity to go to the gym, she says, you can add another 20 minutes of cardio exercises, and then you're good to go.

When Altshuler went on a yearlong world tour a few years ago, she didn't always have a ready-made exercise opportunity. So she devised her own. She did arm raises by lifting her backpack overhead. She used books, water bottles or a sack of rice as free weights.

"We always have our own body weight to work with," she says, "so we can do pushups, sit-ups, leg lifts and lots of stretching. If you encounter a stairwell or staircase, you can march or run up and down six to 10 times, then do pushups and sit-ups—and repeat. I do this, even if I'm home, when it's dark and cold outside, or I want to get to work early."

For those determined to brave the dark, the focus is on safety, says Altshuler. Wear a reflective vest or headlamp if running, or flickering lights if on the bike. And if you are visiting a snowy or icy place, be extra careful to avoid slipping. Choose clothing that keeps you warm and protected from the elements, and warm up slowly, making sure your head, chest, extremities, and muscles stay warm.

For those unwilling to exercise before sunrise, Altshuler suggests working out during lunchtime. "I'm a big fan of lunchbreak workouts for people with desk jobs," she says, "because they need to get up and move in the middle of the day."

She actually prefers working out when the sun is up but there's still a chill in the air, so she can hike or run and not overheat.

Altshuler also suggests while it's good to get into a regular exercise routine, it's also good to change up the actual routine.

"Cross-training gives different muscles a chance to work and to rest," she says. "It's about exercise or muscle specificity. When I'm swimming, I'm using specific muscles. When hiking, I'm using different muscles as well as some of the same muscles, but differently. Even if you just switch the order of your exercises, you can both challenge and restore your muscles."

It comes down to this. Even though it's that cold, dark time of year designed for hibernating, the range of workout options means there's really no excuse to avoid exercise during the bleak midwinter. ■

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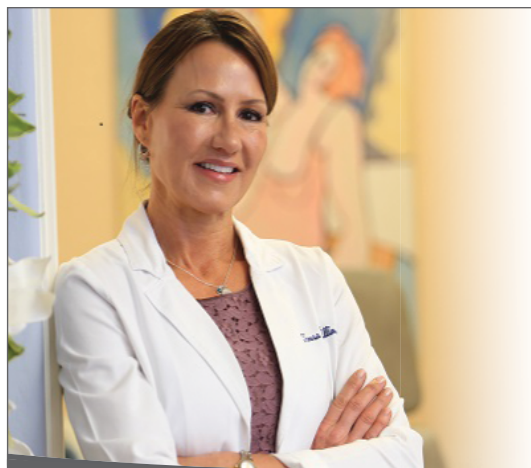
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ARE YOU READY FOR CHANGE?

The stages we must go through to fulfill our resolutions

BY BARBARA QUINN-INTERMILL, MS, RDN, CDE



OK,

it's time to get serious. Not only are we beginning a new year, but a new decade lies before us ... untouched and unexplored. We know we need to make some changes in our eating and exercise habits. But are we ready to actually do it?

There is a meaningful poem attributed to Portia Nelson (in italics below) that beautifully describes the stages of change psychologists say we go through when we need to make permanent changes in our behavior, whether it's to eat healthier, lose weight or kick an addiction.

Professionals call it the Transtheoretical (TTM) stages of change or more simply, our "readiness to change." In other words, as much as we may know what we need to do, we can only do it when we are ready.



Stage 1: Precontemplation

*I walk down the street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I fall in.
I am lost ... I am hopeless.
It isn't my fault.
It takes forever to find a way out.*

Translation:

"I can't see my problem. How can I know the solution?"

We may be here when we first get the news that our habits are infringing on our health and well-being. But we may not accept that we need to do anything about it. To move from this stage, we need to pay attention to what trusted others tell us about the risks of staying on our current path versus the benefits of making a change.

Stage 2: Contemplation

*I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I pretend I don't see it.
I fall in again.
I can't believe I am in this same place.
But it isn't my fault.
It still takes a long time to get out.*

Translation:

"I now know that I need to make a change. I'm thinking about what I can do to make things better. I'm just not ready to go there yet."

At this stage, we need correct information about how we might change our eating or exercise habits. We are thinking about what we want and don't want to do. We still are not ready to change, however.

Stage 3: Preparation

*I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I see it there.
I still fall in ... it's a habit ... but,
my eyes are open.
I know where I am.
It is my fault.
I get out immediately.*

Translation:

"I'm getting excited about making a change. I'm preparing to do what I need to do. I'm still not totally convinced that I can do this, however."

As we prepare to change how we eat and exercise, we need to make a plan. What is one thing I can do differently? How will I do it? When and how often will I do it? What will I need to give up in order to go forward with this?

Stage 4: Action

*I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I walk around it.*

Translation:

"I finally make the move. I change my surroundings and behavior. I am committed. Others start to see the changes I have made."

Woohoo! We are actually doing what we said we were going to do. And we're excited about it. We are making better food choices. We have exercise on our schedules. We need encouragement at this point. And we need to monitor our progress.

Stage 5: Maintenance

I walk down another street.

Translation:

"I am strongly committed to stay on this new path. I don't want to go back to where I was."

This may be the very hardest part. We need to guard ourselves from going back to old habits. Yet we also need to give ourselves a break when we are not perfect. This is when we need strategies to get up and keep going in the direction we know is best even when we slip.

**DO NEW YEAR'S
RESOLUTIONS
WORK?
ONLY WHEN WE ARE
READY FOR THEM.
IT'S TIME. ■**

Barbara Quinn-Intermill is a registered dietitian nutritionist and author of "Quinn-Essential Nutrition: The Uncomplicated Science of Eating." Email her at barbara@quinnessentialnutrition.com.



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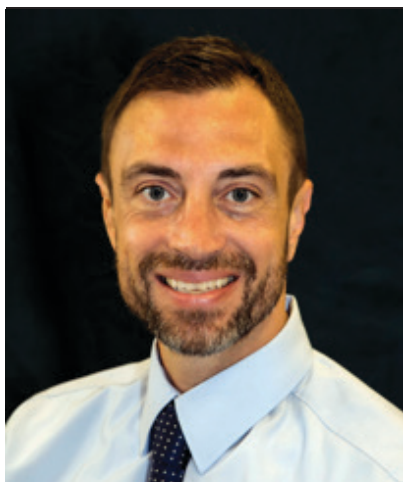
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GOOD NIGHT, SLEEP TIGHT

Rituals to improve the quality and quantity of your rest

BY MELANIE BRETZ



DR. MICHAEL PRESTI



FOR MANY OF US, sleep doesn't come easy. And without an adequate dose of it, starting out the morning on a good footing can be just as challenging.

Developing rituals or routines that ease us into restfulness or set the tone for the day ahead, seem to make a difference. While I innately rebel against the rote or ruts, I'm finding that purposeful rituals inspire a sense of calm as well as focus.

"While we hear a lot about the importance of basic sleep hygiene—avoiding caffeine, nicotine and other stimulants late in the day, much less public attention has been drawn to the influence nighttime routines have on our sleep," says Dr. Michael Presti, board-certified neurologist and sleep medicine specialist with Montage Medical Group. "The nature and intensity of our activities in the hours before bed can have a profound effect on the quality of our sleep as well as our ability to fall and stay asleep. We can optimize our sleep quality by adopting healthy nighttime behavioral routines."

According to Dr. Presti, there are a handful of general rules to follow when establishing routines. "By far, the most important principle is to avoid anything too emotionally stimulating in the hours before bed," he says. "Intense emotional responses are processed in the brain's limbic system that when activated, trigger a cascade of neural and hormonal activity that ultimately put the body into a more vigilant and stimulated state."

"While the occasional late night 'emotional curveball' is unavoidable, many of us routinely expose ourselves to this sort of input—just look at the typical storylines reported on the nightly news. It helps to be more intentional about controlling the content of our consciousness in the hours before bed. Trying occupying the mind with some form of relaxing, enjoyable, enriching or affirming activity, such as meditation, prayer or restful reading as a prelude to sleep."

He goes on to say that it's important to limit our exposure to artificial lighting at night, since it can throw off our biological clock. Melatonin, a light-sensitive hormone, influences the biological clock that regulates the sleep/wake cycle of our inherent circadian rhythms. If light is entering the brain, it puts the brakes on melatonin production.

Growing up, I didn't have much exposure to traditions or rituals. Maybe that's why they've become important to me. Rituals add continuity and a sense of comfort in something that I can return to each evening and morning. Given a relatively high energy level and metabolism, it's no easy task to wind down and prepare my body, and my mind, for sleep.

At the risk of sounding like one of those tedious Facebook posts that drones on about countless details, I do have a practice that seems to work for me. (At least I'm not including a photo of me drinking tea in my PJs!)

Turning off the computer, setting my alarm, drawing the shades, opening or closing windows, heating water for tea, even washing my face and brushing my teeth, form a routine that, strangely enough, relaxes me.

After everything's set, I enjoy the tea, letting my mind wander. In the morning, I wake up and set an intention for the day by doing a series of yoga poses. Yoga reminds me to be engaged—it also tells me loud and clear that my body is aging! With the poses, I go through how I want to think and behave during the day using words like grateful, compassionate, curious and kind. And acknowledging both my strengths and weaknesses.

Many of my friends practice some form of ritual for winding down one day and gearing up for the next. Most involve some form of mindfulness practice as well as crafting an environment conducive to sleep or to facing the day with renewed vigor. One that I especially like is the ritual practiced by Viveca Lohr, executive director of Meals on Wheels of the Monterey Peninsula.

Given her nearly 20 years of practicing Shotokan karate, it makes sense that Lohr would incorporate that discipline into her rituals around sleep. Rather than counting sheep, Lohr mentally recites kata—a pre-arranged set of stances, kicks and punches. There are 26 Shotokan karate kata, each with 20 or so moves.

"It's a way to brush up on the kata as well as, hopefully, distract and relax my mind toward slumber," says the Pacific Grove resident. "It's weird that although I'm doing this in my head, I get physically tired after about five kata. If I have a busy brain, it can take a few tries to get through just one."

"Although regular exercise represents an important positive influence on sleep quality and overall well-being, strenuous physical activity should be avoided within two hours of bedtime," Dr. Presti advises. "Intense physical exercise activates the cardiovascular and autonomic nervous systems, which ultimately leaves the body in a more stimulated state. It may also negatively affect one's circadian rhythm."

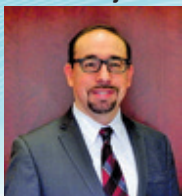
"On the other hand, certain types of low-intensity physical activity, such as tai chi, stretching and yoga, help to focus and relax both the mind and body, and can represent a central component of a healthy evening 'wind-down' routine." Think of discovering your sleep rituals as an adventure—a way to promote good physical and mental health as well as give you rest to fuel the next day.

There are many options and they're all up to you. Experiment. Find routines that serve you well. Be patient with yourself. And get a good night's sleep. ■

Melanie Bretz lives in Monterey and has written on a wide range of topics, including health care, during a writing career spanning more than 30 years.

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UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

Streaming video system connects parents and SVMHS NICU infants

BY KATHRYN MCKENZIE



ONE OF THE TOUGHEST THINGS, as a parent, is to be separated from your child. For those who have a baby being treated in a neonatal intensive care unit, that separation is medically necessary—but also incredibly difficult.

Now, a new innovation at Salinas Valley Memorial Healthcare System will allow parents to view their babies in the NICU through the magic of the internet.

The system, called NICview, was introduced last month at SVMHS's Level III NICU, and Salinas Valley is the first hospital in Monterey County to offer this to families with babies needing NICU care.

“

DR. ROBERT CASTRO CHECKS ON A NICU BABY; ABOVE THE BED, TO THE LEFT, IS A NICVIEW VIDEO CAMERA.

Unobtrusive video cameras mounted close to eight NICU beds deliver live streamed video images around the clock, so that families can watch their newborn anytime, anywhere—on any device with internet access.

Parents, siblings and other relatives will be able to see their little ones 24/7 by logging in to a special secure webpage with encrypted software. Besides being secure, NICview is also easy to use, according to SVMHS.

“We’re very excited about this,” says Dr. Robert Castro, SVMHS’s NICU director, who says that premature or sick babies may be in the NICU for as long as six to eight weeks. “This is vital equipment.”

The idea came from the NICU staff members, who wanted to help keep parents connected to their hospitalized infants, and saw a need for this technology to ease parents’ anxieties about how their baby was doing. Now, parents will be able to see for themselves, says Dr. Castro: “They’ll be able to view (their child) in real time.”

It’s also a better way for parents and other family members to bond with their babies despite the distance between them, and to observe the daily progress that their little ones are making. It also can ease stress for parents who aren’t able to make regular hospital visits because of work, family or other commitments.

The NICview system was fully funded through donations made to the Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals Program, according to foundation operations director Melissa Gross. CMN also has given grants to SVMHS to purchase a “NICU on wheels,” a special vehicle to transport sick infants to Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital at Stanford for more intensive critical care.

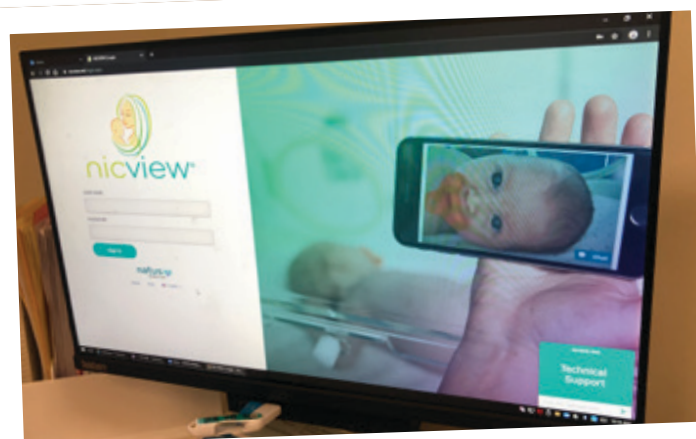
NICU caregivers will give parents the user name and password to use the NICview system, and will remain in control of video streaming at all times. They can also turn off the camera as needed. In addition, no recordings are made, and no images are stored of the streamed video.

The Level III NICU at SVMHS operates in conjunction with Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital. More information on the NICU can be found at www.svmh.com/nicu. ■



CHILDREN'S MIRACLE NETWORK PROVIDED FUNDS FOR NICVIEW AS WELL AS THE NEW "NICU ON WHEELS."

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BENDING, STRETCHING, AND BONDING

Creating community through Carmel Pilates classes

BY LISA CRAWFORD WATSON



PHYSIQUE EXERCISE SALON
OWNER MADDY CROUCH

Not everyone knows each other's names. Yet one, two, three, and for some, five times a week, they lie down next to each other and exercise. These are the women of Physique Exercise Salon, who work out, side by side on Pilates reformers.

Designed by Joseph Pilates in 1926, the reformer is an apparatus that gets participants up off the Pilates mat and onto a carriage that moves back and forth along tracks within a frame. The carriage is attached to a system of coils, straps, and pulleys, which work in concert to promote strength and flexibility. The modifications available through the structure mean that someone in their 70s, someone healing from surgery, and someone in their 20s can all work out together.

Through this process, the dedicated women of Physique Exercise Salon have become stretched, strong, and social. Most have said it's like belonging to a club.

"I never intended the focus of the salon to be mostly women, but that's where it's gone," says owner Maddy Crouch, who established the Carmel salon six years ago. "We have men and women of all ages, but the classes are primarily women in their 40s to 70s. It's a collection of like-minded people, six at a time, who are lying down, mostly, so they're not comparing themselves in a mirror. There's no judgment; instead, they feed off each other's energy."

Reformer Pilates is a mind-body exercise program, says Crouch, which works with resistance for strength training and stretching, supported by deep breathing, which fosters a sense of well-being. Participants come out of class feeling physically and mentally better—both exercised and optimistic.

"After an hour of strength training and dynamic stretches which elongate the muscles, people leave feeling lengthened," Crouch says. "A woman told me she had to adjust the rearview mirror in her car after class because she was sitting taller. Pilates improves posture and perspective."

Reformer "jump" classes, where participants push off from a footboard, add a cardio component without introducing high impact moves. Core classes work central strength and flexibility. And, by multitasking the entire time, the brain is engaged. It truly is a mind-body exercise.

"One of the great benefits of Pilates is the centering of the self," says Pilates instructor Sekina Russell. "You get in tune with yourself, engaging your mind and body to work together to achieve something. At the same time, by using deep breathing, you get a sense of relaxation you don't experience with a lot of other exercise modalities."

Russell was introduced to Pilates by her mom, who enlisted her to join in with early morning videos. She graduated to a mat Pilates class at Monterey Peninsula College, and was later introduced to the reformer.

"At first, I didn't want to do it, didn't want to like it," Russell said. "But I felt so much better and had so much more energy. Five months went by, and I decided to become certified as an instructor. The 500 hours of training was a big commitment, but the idea wouldn't leave my mind or body. I had to do it."

In addition to fitness, the part of Pilates that appeals to Russell is the social interaction among participants.

"I enjoy meeting different people and engaging them," she says. "I appreciate the connections I make with people, and I love to help others feel as good as I do. I want everyone to feel welcomed, validated, and to like coming to my classes, to find it challenging but not dread it." Carmel's Ruth Rachel, a devotee of fitness-walking and hiking, started taking reformer Pilates to stretch and strengthen an injured shoulder. Two years later, she is a reformer regular.

"At this point, I take reformer Pilates because it's fun," Rachel says. "If it's not, I won't make it a habit. It's also a good mind-body connection exercise. And, I get to be with people I enjoy, so the ambiance is great. The instructors are very competent and personable, and they manage the class individually, even though it's a collective exercise. By the end of class, I feel better. I would never give it up."

“ONE OF THE GREAT BENEFITS OF PILATES IS THE CENTERING OF THE SELF”
- INSTRUCTOR
SEKINA RUSSELL

CONTINUE TO PAGE 25

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Bulletins, News & Events in the Community

DOCTOR'S NOTES



FROM LEFT: DR. WALTER MILLS, DR. CHRISTOPHER BURKE AND DR. CHAD HARRIS

Dr. Burke named Natividad Physician of the Year

Dr. Christopher Burke, medical director of Natividad's emergency department, is Natividad's 2019 Physician of the Year. Nominated and selected by medical staff peers and residents in training, the award honors an exceptional physician who inspires healthy lives.

"One of the core areas of Physician of the Year is leadership, and Dr. Burke leads by example," says Dr. Chad Harris, Natividad's chief of staff and chief medical information officer. "In the emergency department and on numerous task forces, he is always there to advocate for the groups he is a part of to ensure the best care for patients, staff, and Natividad as a whole."

Natividad emergency specialists are available 24 hours a day at the Salinas medical center for everything from general illnesses and disease to life-threatening conditions.

"We are available nights, weekends and holidays to help patients through some of the worst days of their lives, whether it be a life-saving procedure or merely holding their hands and reassuring them they are well," says Dr. Burke. "We care for any patient who comes to us, regardless of insurance, ability to pay, or language spoken. I am blessed with an extremely high quality and dedicated nursing staff and a supportive administration."

“
OUR
PATIENTS
AND STAFF
GREATLY
BENEFIT
FROM HIM”

- DR. GARY GRAY,
NATIVIDAD, CEO

Dr. Burke is well respected among all levels of staff, from fellow physicians, to nursing staff, to ancillary members of the Natividad community. "I really enjoy working with Dr. Burke," says Natividad CEO Dr. Gary Gray. "Because of his calm demeanor and leadership, our patients and staff greatly benefit from him."

Affiliated with University of California, San Francisco, Natividad is Monterey County's only teaching hospital. In addition to his emergency department duties, Dr. Burke is an assistant professor of clinical medicine through the Natividad Family Medicine Residency Program.

"I love interacting with and teaching the Family Medicine residents the art of medicine," says Dr. Burke. "It is inspiring to be part of the tradition of shaping the next generation that will continue to improve our patients' lives."

Dr. Burke has served as medical director of Natividad's emergency department for three years and has been with the hospital for 20 years. He is a 1996 graduate of the Georgetown School of Medicine and completed his medical residency at the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1999.

CONTINUE 'DOCTORS NOTES' ON
PAGE 26

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Flu season is here – time to get vaccinated



Flu season is here. With more and more cases of the flu being reported here in Monterey County and all over the country, it is more important than ever to get vaccinated.

Influenza is a serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and sometimes even death. Every flu season is different, and influenza infection can affect people differently. Even healthy people can get very sick from the flu and spread it to others. The most important thing you can do to protect yourself and your family is to get vaccinated.

Influenza (also known as the flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by flu viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The flu is different from a cold. The flu usually comes on suddenly. People who have the flu often feel some or all of these symptoms:

- Fever or feeling feverish/chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.

Most healthy adults may be able to infect other people beginning one day before symptoms develop and up to five to seven days after becoming sick. Children may pass the virus for longer than seven days.

Symptoms start one to four days after the virus enters the body. That means that you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick. Some people can be infected with the flu virus but have no symptoms. During this time, those persons may still spread the virus to others.

A flu shot cannot cause flu illness. Flu vaccines that are administered with a needle are currently made in two ways: the vaccine is made either with a) flu vaccine viruses that have been “inactivated” and are therefore not infectious, or b) with no flu vaccine viruses at all (which is the case for recombinant influenza vaccine). The most common side effects from the influenza shot are soreness, redness, tenderness or swelling where the shot was given. Low-grade fever, headache and muscle aches also may occur.

Pedestrian safety grant extends education to schools

Monterey County Health Department has been awarded \$150,000 as part of a Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Program grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety. The yearlong grant will bring pedestrian safety education to three elementary schools in Soledad and two elementary schools in Greenfield. The grant will also benefit Gonzales community members.

The grant's aim is to encourage parents and students to walk or bike to school. Walking to school is an activity that benefits families by including physical activity and the opportunity to meet other parents. The intent is also to reduce pedestrian injuries in the participating cities, which had a total of 20 pedestrian collisions recorded by the police in 2018; half the collisions involved children under the age of 18.

The grant efforts will bring pedestrian safety education to grades 2 through 5. Topics will include looking in all directions, listening and watching for cars when crossing the street, and making eye contact with drivers. This type of education is usually provided only to second-graders. However, due to the high number of pedestrian collisions in the cities of Soledad and Greenfield, pedestrian safety education will be extended to third, fourth and fifth grades.

Special walk-to-school events will be held throughout the year to encourage students and parents to walk instead of driving to school. An additional benefit will be a reduction in cars driven and less traffic on local roads.

Funding for this grant is from the California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Natividad Medical Group moves to new space inside hospital

Natividad Medical Group, Natividad's in-house family medical practice, has moved to an expanded and updated space in the hospital's main building, next to the gift shop on Natividad's first floor.

The medical group's physicians see patients for overall health and wellness, maintaining a long-standing relationship, and are able to refer patients to specialists for needs such as cardiology or oncology. This summer's expansion increased the number of exam rooms from five to 12 and plans are under way to add practitioners to the team.

NMG's medical staff includes Dr. Minerva Perez-Lopez, Dr. Ana Arias, Dr. Marc Tunzi, Dr. Jacqueline Romero and nurse practitioner Amber Paris. NMG treats patients of all ages, including children, and offers a range of services including physicals and well-child exams, vaccinations, obstetrics and women's health services, minor outpatient surgical procedures, care for chronic medical conditions and more.

“The expansion of Natividad Medical Group helps Natividad better serve Monterey County,” says Dr. Perez-Lopez. “The practice complements the care the hospital provides by increasing primary care access to our patients and addressing the health care needs of our community.”

The practice is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m. and 1:30-5:00 p.m. New patients are accepted. For appointments, call (831) 759-0674. ■



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BALLROOM DANCERS LEONID SIDORENKO AND OLGA AGAFONOV. COURTESY OF ELFI KLUCK PHOTOGRAPHY

Scientists are just beginning to study the effects of exercise on the aging brain, but one conclusion they've reached is that dance is particularly good at preserving and enhancing memory and balance.

According to a recent study published in the open-access journal *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, older people who routinely exercise can reverse the

signs of aging in the brain, with dance exercise having the most profound effect.

"In this study, we show that two different types of physical exercise (dancing and endurance training) both increase the area of the brain that declines with age," Dr. Kathrin Rehfeld, lead author of the study, told *ScienceDaily.com*. "In comparison, it was only dancing that led to noticeable behavioral changes in terms of improved balance."

The study involved senior volunteers with an average age of 68. After 18 months of either doing endurance training or learning dance routines, they showed an increase in the hippocampus area of the brain. The hippocampus plays a key role in memory and learning as well as balance.

In previous studies, other researchers have also looked at how dance can help ease symptoms of depression, as well as its ability to enable neuroplasticity—the brain's ability to form new neural connections, according to *News-Medical.net*.

Studies also suggest that the combination of movement and rhythm helps maintain spatial memory, the sense of where we are and how we move through the world.

As with starting any form of exercise, though, consult with your doctor first. The good news is that with so many types of dance classes to choose from, there's bound to be one that is right for your fitness level. You may want to try several different types of dance classes, and different instructors, to see what's best for you. ■ — **Kathryn McKenzie**

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6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to compulsive overeaters and to practice these principles in all our affairs. ■

To learn more about Overeaters Anonymous, visit oamonterey.org.

RANDY TUNNELL

PHOTOGRAPHER

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Louise Goetzelt of Del Rey Oaks has been taking classes at Physique Exercise Salon ever since it opened. A year after she retired from the U.S. Army, she sought to stay in shape through an exercise program that gave her a blend of cardio, strength, and flexibility, without beating up her body.

"Spending 34 years in the Army wasn't gentle on the body, causing a lot of wear and tear," she says, "which required shoulder surgery, knee surgeries and, eventually a knee replacement. That I was doing Pilates before my surgeries reduced my recovery time by 60 to 70 percent.

"Pilates enables me to do the work I need to stay in shape without overburdening my joints. And at Physique, they're really good at showing us how to modify movement to accommodate our bodies."

Goetzelt typically attends three or four classes a week, including mat and reformer Pilates, plus a TRX class, a form of strength training that uses a system of ropes and webbing called a "suspension trainer," which enables participants to work against their own body weight.

"While I like the diversity of the training I get, part of the appeal is the gang I work out with," Goetzelt says. "I like the camaraderie. We exchange ideas, tips on travel, food, child-raising, aging. It's like belonging to a club with people who have a lot of life experiences, and enjoy each other while sweating."

By the end of this year, Sue Carota will have completed 1,000 Pilates classes at Physique Exercise Salon. She's always started her day with exercise, which typically has involved years of tennis, running, and dance. But she began looking for a modality that would give her a great workout without putting undue stress on her body. She found it via reformer Pilates.

"Unlike running, I never have to talk myself into Pilates," she says. "I get better results for less effort with Pilates than any other form of exercise. And, the more I do it, the stronger I get, the more enjoyable it is."

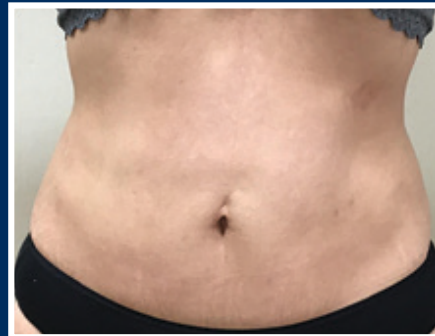
Through Pilates, Carota says her morning routine is about a group of people who share a common bond, coming together to start their day out right with an activity that feels good and fosters rapid results—while lying down. ■



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