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Stroll Around Town Feeling Great! (Mentally and Physically)

Hailey Keel, Freelance Writer

If you're like, me who hates the social presence of being at a gym filled with tons of young adults flexing their muscles but want to exercise healthily, look no further than walking.

"But what are the health benefits of walking? It's so simple to do?" You may ask.

According to the Mayo Clinic, walking daily, even a simple brisk around the neighborhood, can help with many things, such as burning fat, building muscle, improving balance, and straightening the immune system. It also can help build metabolism. To add a pep in your step and upgrade your walk to a "workout", the Mayo Clinic recommends swinging your arms as you walk as well as keeping your head up and not looking towards the ground.

However, walking also can help with mental health and overall mood. In a poll by the American Psychological Association (APA), 25% of young adults who walked an average of 150 minutes a week saw a lowered risk of depression. The APA also found that 1 in 9 cases of depression can be prevented if one walks an average of 30 minutes a day.

Many walk to help clear their mind and build cre-

ativity. For me, I like to put on my AirPods and find a good playlist, usually one fixed around classic rock, and walk around my neighborhood with my French Bulldog, Hazel. When I finish walking, I feel energized and not so panicky about things that can bother me, such as graduating from school in May or thinking about the 50-page thesis I have to write this semester (yikes!).

"But what if I don't have a nice neighborhood to walk around in?" you may ask.

A great easy walking "trail" I found is Main Street in Old Wethersfield. With its charming history such as the Webb-Dean-Stevens Museum that has three Revolution-

a r y - t i m e h o u s e s, the Old W e t h e r s field Cove, and the Old W e t h e r s field Village Cemetery, Main Street is an easy, flat street. I usually start



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Working Out In Style: Some Pros To Hitting The Local Gym

Hailey Keel, Freelance Writer

It is almost perhaps one of the most common New Year's resolutions of all time: losing weight or working out. If one does not like the typical walk in the park around the neighborhood and wants to have a fun time trying all sorts of equipment such as weights and bikes, then the local gym is the best place. The gym may sound scary for some due to the number of people or the amount of machinery (that some can see as overstimulating), but working out at the local gym outweighs the cons. After all, it is what you want to do at the gym that makes your experience whether a good or bad time.

Going to the local gym has many health benefits, some obvious and some not. Working out for at least 150 minutes per week (or 30 minutes per day) is proven to help lose weight, decrease anxiety and depression, and build muscle. In an article by livestrong.com, a not-so-obvious benefit of working out daily is that it helps strengthen your heart. It not only allows the heart to pump with less strain but helps keep cholesterol levels at bay and blood pressure at a healthy range.

One other benefit of going to the gym versus hitting the pavement is that you don't have to rely on the weather to get a great workout. Whether it is snowing a foot of snow outside or if it's raining cats and dogs, the gym is dry and warm. Going to the local gym also provides you with showers so you don't end up driving home in a puddle of sweat.

Equipment is also a benefit of hitting the gym. Rather than spend thousands of dollars on a home gym, you can go to the gym and try many pieces of machinery for a low price, allowing you to customize your workout each time you go. You can also challenge yourself (of course, in a safe way), on different machinery and weights and see if you can go for longer periods or lift heavier weights.

Although it is easy to join chain gyms like Work Out World or Anytime Fitness, one local gym in Newington has been proven to help families in the area. Located at 37 Ann Street in Newington, CT Workout's goal, according to their website, is to "help people look better, feel better, and move better."

Unlike some other gyms, CT Workout allows you to work one-on-one with a personal trainer. However, there is also group training for those who still want to work with others. There is also the six-week challenge, where the gym works with you to help you lose significant weight with boot-camp style workouts that will guarantee help you lose weight as well as build muscle.

For owner Benjamin Petitpas, he says that working out "is the closest thing to the fountain of youth." It not only helps with muscle strengthening and improving bone density, but it can help with enhancing your everyday life mentally.

When someone signs up for a membership at a chain gym, Petitpas says they are often left without guidance or support. However, at CT Workout, the gym specializes in "coaching-based programs such as personal training and group training workouts, offers distinct benefits when compared to larger commercial facilities."

"Ultimately, our success is based on our members' success, and choosing a gym like CT Workout provides a unique blend of expertise, community, and personalized support for a more fulfilling and effective fitness experience." continues Petitpas.

Want to start but don't know where to begin? CT Workout even has a program for that. For \$99, you get 28 days of personal training in the 28-Day Jump Start Program. Start with a personal coach that will help you lose weight as well as even find a new hobby or two through personalized workouts and trainings. The gym also helps you find healthy recipes to help you feel better even when you are not working out.

The gym is open from 5 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily with personal trainers ready to train. Pricing ranges from \$30 to \$40 a week and \$300 to \$400 a month for personal training. To learn more about how to join CT Workout or to sign up for a free consultation, go to www.ctworkout.com.



2024 Living Well

General Manager/Advertising Director Greg Barden

> Production Manager Colette Breton

Design Team Deb Prater, Jim Heffernan

> Ad Sales Holly Shuler Libby Lord Rob Zapulla Carey Gause

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Stroll Around Town Feeling Great!

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my walk by parking near the Heirloom Market and getting a warm, golden latte before making a sharp

left to walk toward the cove. It is always fascinating to see if the cove is flooded or not, or to see how many geese and birds are still here during



winter. Next, I stop and look at the Cove Warehouse (built in 1690), before walking down a small path to the left of it, dropping me off where the old state prison once stood. Eventually, I walk down some neighborhoods before making my way to where I started.

Now, if you want to be more specific and look at nearly all of the historical sights in Old Wethersfield, the town has a walk simply called the Wethersfield Heritage Walk. It is three miles, and a self-guided tour as you make your way along houses and historical areas within the town with each of the 22 stops with a sign with historical information. You can begin the tour at any of the places, but if you want to walk in order, the map for the trail is found on the Historic Wethersfield website under "What To See and Do".

If you want to head on a farther trail than the threemile self-guided tour, there is a six-mile track around town as well as a 10-mile heritage trail that covers multiple terrains. Both trails' routes are also found on the Historic Wethersfield website.

So next time you're thinking of seeing a different view other than your neighbor's house and all the other hous-

es on your street, get in your car and drive to Main Street in Wethersfield for a fun, scenic path that will never bore you!





How Cherries Benefit Your Body

The first image to come to many people's minds when they think of cherries may be one of these tiny stone fruits sitting atop an ice cream sundae. That's an undeniably appealing image, but cherries are more than just a must-have sundae topping.

Cherries benefit the body in various ways. Nutritious and delicious, cherries may find their way into even more people's diets once people recognize the many ways cherries can improve overall health.

- Cherries and blood sugar: The American Diabetes Association notes that cherries can help people with diabetes control their blood sugar levels. The glycemic index (GI) is a system that rates foods which contain carbohydrates, and foods with a low GI rating slowly release glucose into a person's blood. Cherries have a low GI and can help anyone living with diabetes manage their blood sugar more easily.
- Cherries and inflammation: Cherries are rich in antioxidants, which means they boast similar anti-inflammatory properties to fruits such as blueberries. Vitamin A, vitamin C and vitamin E are antioxidants present in cherries, and the Cleveland Clinic notes that one study found that consuming 45 cherries per day can reduce inflammation brought on by free radicals. However, anyone considering consuming so many cherries is urged to speak with their physician first, as individ-



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Martial Arts Center To Open In Rocky Hill

Hailey Keel, Freelance Writer

Want to find a workout that helps you stay in shape and gives you skills that can help you protect yourself?

Opening Jan. 13 at 13 New Britain Avenue in Rocky Hill, Trinity Martial Art & Boxing will offer a range of martial arts from jiu-jitsu, a type of martial art that focuses on grappling and groundfishing without striking, to muay thai, also known as Thai Boxing, that uses stand-up striking and multiple clinching techniques.

For owner John Roderick, martial arts has always been a part of him. His father boxed in the Army and as a kid, he got bullied.

When one enters Trinity Arts, a range of flags hang on the wall. Each represents either countries where martial arts originate from or flags of the nationalities of members. There is also large red and blue mats lined along the floor, making sure that if one does fall, they are falling on padded material.

Until Jan. 31, to start an adult membership is \$99 for the first month. After Feb. 1, it is \$129 a month. Children's memberships are \$50 for the first month if signed up in January, and anytime after Feb. 1 is \$75 a month. Just like going to a regular gym, members have access to all of the classes and can go to as many as they want per week. Classes run from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Monday to Thursday, and on Fridays from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. is an open mat where you have a choice of "working out" on the mat or in the ring. Soon, other classes, either taught by the coaches at Trinity or guest trainers, will be offered such as women's self-defense.

For more information regarding Trinity Martial Arts and Boxing, please visit their website https://ct-muaythai.com/ or follow them on Facebook.



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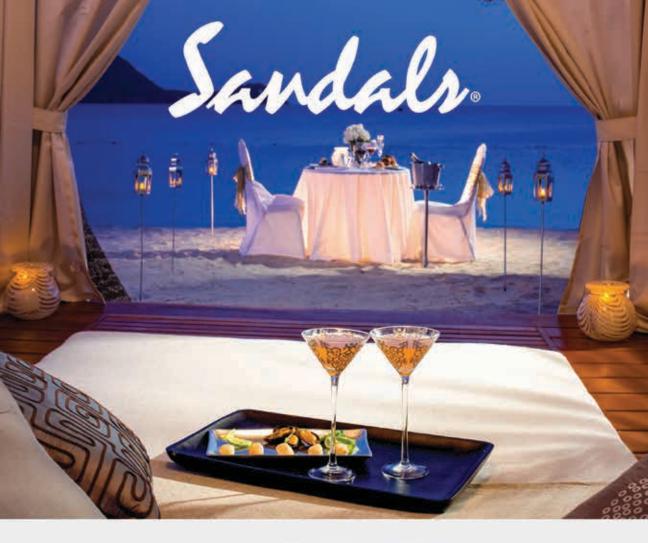
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Moderate-Intensity Activities That Can Improve Overall Health

Exercise is an important component of a healthy lifestyle. The current Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services indicates adults need 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity each week. But what constitutes moderate-intensity physical activity?

Moderate-intensity physical activity gets the heart pumping, but only around one in five adults and teens get enough exercise to maintain good health, says the American Heart Association. It may be because people are having difficulty figuring out what constitutes moderate-intensity activity. Here is a more detailed explanation of the types of activities considered moderate-intensity.

- Walking very briskly (roughly four miles per hour)
- Heavy cleaning, like washing windows, vacuuming and mopping
- · Mowing the lawn with a power mower
- Bicycling with light effort (10 to 12 miles per hour)
- Playing recreational badminton

- Playing doubles tennis
- Slow dancing
- · Shooting a basketball
- Water aerobics
- Playing volleyball
- Heavy gardening
- Painting and decorating

Anything that doesn't increase heart rate and breathing speed will not count as moderate-intensity activity towards the recommended amount of activity. However, any exercise is better than no exercise at all. As long as an activity breaks up long periods of sitting still, doctors says it is still beneficial.





Self-Care Strategies To Protect Long-Term Mental Health

Mental health has always been important, but the need for people to prioritize their emotional, psychological and social well-being gained greater attention during the COVID-19 pandemic. Social distancing restrictions designed to reduce cases of COVID-19 contributed to feelings of isolation, depression and anxiety in millions of individuals across the globe, sparking a heightened sense of curiosity about what people can do to safeguard their mental health in the short-term but also over the course of their lives. Pandemic-related restrictions have long since been lifted throughout much of the world. But the need to prioritize mental health remains. The National Institute of Mental Health notes that self-care can play a vital role in maintaining mental health. With that in

mind, individuals can consider these strategies as they look to safeguard their mental health over the long haul.

• Exercise regularly. Exercise benefits the body in myriad ways, and those benefits extend to mental health. The NIMH reports that a 30-minute daily walk can boost mood. In addition, the United Kingdom-based Mental Health Foundation reports that regular physical activity positively affects self-esteem and can even lead to a reduction in stress and anxiety. That's important to note, as the online medical resource Healthline reports that chronic anxiety can adversely affect the body's nervous, cardiovascular, digestive, immune, and respiratory systems.



- Maintain social connections. The NIMH also touts the benefits of
 maintaining social connections, including relying on friends and family for emotional support and practical help. The Centers for
 Disease Control and Prevention notes that people who are socially connected and maintain stable and supportive relationships
 are more likely to have better mental health outcomes than those who don't.
- Eat a nutritious, balanced diet. The American Society for Nutrition notes that diet can be an important ally for people looking to improve and preserve their mental health. Numerous studies have examined the relationship between diet and mental



health, and the ASN notes a growing body of research suggests a strong connection between a healthy diet and mental health. A 2019 review published in The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition found that increased consumption of fruits and vegetables positively affects psychological health. That same review also indicated daily vegetable consumption provides a therapeutic effect that can help to reduce symptoms among people with clinical depression.

• **Resolve to read more.** Much like exercise, reading has been linked to a host of positive health outcomes, including mental health benefits. A 2009 study from researchers at the University of Sussex found that reading can reduce stress by as much as 68 percent. Escapism is another potentially potent benefit of reading, as a recent report in Psychology Today noted that researchers believe narrative absorption, which refers to the experience of being immersed or engaged while reading a story, provides an escape or opportunity for mental reflection.

Self-care can go a long way toward promoting long-term mental health. Various strategies and activities fall under the umbrella of self-care, and each can have a profound and lasting effect on mental health.

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