



Fit For Sisters

Andrew Loscutt
Columnist

Fitness and health lessons of 2018

At the end of a year, it's all too common to focus on the road ahead without considering the past year. This is a good time for a reflection on some of 2018's important fitness and health lessons.

2018 continued with a strong push for the HIIT concept. HIIT stands for "high intensity interval training" and is a good way to achieve improved fitness with shorter training duration.

HIIT involves very short "bursts" or intervals of high intensity work which is meant to be very challenging. Expect heavy breathing, leaden legs, and sensations of discomfort. Once through the interval, light recovery work is done until the body is ready to press through another interval. This contrasting style is programming the body to move lactate out of the working muscles, deliver more oxygen, and to increase aerobic efficiency. Start with 30 seconds of hard work followed by 2 minutes of normal aerobic intensity. Repeat four times.

Government-issued guidelines for exercise in 2018 suggested 300 minutes of light (any movement) or 150 minutes of moderate (structured) cardiovascular exercise, plus an additional two sessions

of strength training exercises. New guidelines suggest that the exercise can be had in any amount of time. This means getting up and walking around for three minutes counts. The idea is to encourage people to do something, anything, despite constant struggles with time management and busy-ness promoted by a buzzing culture.

A good start? Stand up now and do 10 squats.

The ketogenic diet is still a popular fad among people looking for the "way out" of the obesogenic culture we all live in. The ketogenic diet operates under the premise that too many carbohydrates make people diabetic and diseased. Removing them results in salvation. While this is certainly a good thought, there are a few considerations. First, the majority of ketosis studies are performed on people who are already ill. This means their body is resistant to insulin and the carbs they eat are more likely being stored as fat. Healthy people use insulin to shuttle carbohydrates to muscles to be used for energy, thus diversion around carbohydrate metabolism isn't needed.

It's true that this is helpful to lose weight, but anytime you can't eat a large amount of food there will be weight loss. The best advice is to lower the amount of processed foods one eats, limit sugar, and avoid caloric beverages. This will result in an instant few-hundred-calorie daily deficit for most of us — and a sustainable weight loss of a pound a week. Bragging to others about your science diet won't be necessary.

Smart tech continues to get smarter. In fact the company Athletigen provides a gene-testing kit to provide an insight into what types of exercises one's genes propose they'll excel at. It will tell someone their proper

sports nutrition approach, and it will give them an idea how to recover better. All of this seems gimmicky, and gene science is only a suggestive nudge. Epigenetics, or the environment in relation to how genes are expressed, plays a vital role. How a person developed in their given environment is more important than absolute genetics.

Wearables are devices which offer health and fitness insights directly from one's wrist. They continued to progress in 2018 with Fitbit, Apple, and Google all making outstanding products. You can now monitor your heart rate 24/7 and any abnormal readings be noted, which can be scrutinized by a qualified cardiologist for analysis. A new bicycle helmet from Specialized can sense a crash, sending a notice to your phone; if not disabled, this sounds the alarm to a few people whom the rider selects as emergency contacts. Other GPS-based functions can perform as trackers if someone goes out for a hike and doesn't return.

A simple app on the phone can tell a worried spouse where you are: Sounds a little intrusive, but with pure intentions can be life-saving.

What will 2019 bring to the health and fitness landscape? Will it be more technology, or will it be the less-is-more approach which might get Type A personalities to stop over-analyzing and start getting introspective about performance? There are sure to be more lessons learned, and the chapter has just begun. The exciting thing is that progression, contradiction, and revision is constant, and when viewed as a fun way to be interactive, one cannot complain about yesteryear's advice being "fake news."

Stay tuned for more in 2019.



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Sandy Goodsell
Principal Broker
ABR, CDPE, CIAS, GRI, SRES
541-480-0183

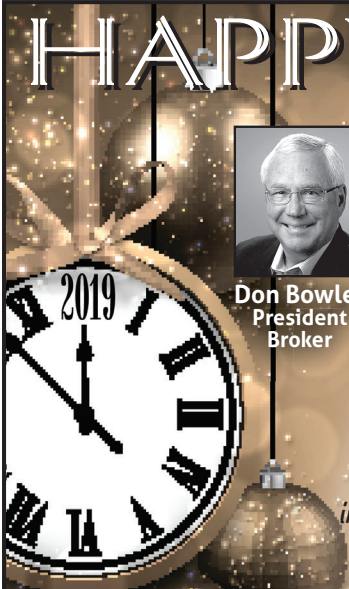


Jonathan Hicks
Broker
865-335-6104

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