

# The Well Now

Fall '93 Fitness Edition

## Meditation Benefits Health

By Morgane McCarthy



If the first thing you think of when somebody mentions meditation is some old,

stoned granola ringing a bell and chanting in his converted '68 Volkswagen bus, you're dead wrong. Meditation is not a fringe thing that weirdos do, it is a world-wide practice used to greatly reduce stress and improve attention. These are important issues for every college student.

Using meditation as a relaxation technique is very easy to do; here is a general program you can try: Set 15 minutes aside in your day and find a quiet place where you're not likely to be disturbed. Sit in a comfortable position with your spine straight (this helps with your breathing). Breathe slowly and steadily from the bottom of your stomach, relaxing your body with each exhale. Pick something to focus on. Your focus can be whatever you'd like; a soothing color, a word, an idea, or a part of your life you'd like to change. Try to keep your mind clear of scattered thoughts. Undoubtedly things will pop up in your mind, but each time you catch yourself wandering off return your attention to your focus. With regular practice you can get very good at clearing your mind quickly of distractions, enabling you to devote all of your attention to the task at hand, whether it be doing well on your chemistry final or calming down after a stressful day.

There is much more out there when it comes to meditation. All major religious faiths contain some form of meditation, it is also an integral part of many spiritual beliefs. People practice meditation alone and in groups, to combat terminal illness and to have more energy.

If you think meditation is a joke you're doing yourself a great disservice. It is a very important tool for achieving good health, just as much as the gym or the running trail. Meditation is now recognized as an effective stress management technique used to combat such medical conditions as insomnia, lower back pain, and essential hypertension or high blood pressure. These are not trivial matters. Don't let your prejudices get in the way of your own health, it could cost you more than you think.

## Energize your life with Club Sports

By Robin Baily



It's Thursday, 4:30 pm, and midterms are next week. You've been living at the library for the past three days, frantically trying to get through that ten-

pager with desperate hopes of still having time to study for exams. You decide to take a break, opting for a quick coffee and cookie at the EMU instead of taking the time to go all the way home for a more nutritious meal. As you're walking back to the library, you think about your friends and wonder if they are as stressed as you. Then you begin to wonder if you still have any friends, as you haven't returned a single one of their calls in days. Feeling quite depressed, you slowly trek up two flights of stairs and somehow make it to your table.

While waiting for the caffeine to kick in, you stare blankly at the window. Suddenly, you are distracted by something outside and begin to focus beyond the glass pane... but what is it? What's going on out there? You see a large group of students having an awesome time running around in the muddy, wet grass and throwing some fluorescent-looking disc at one another. Your spirits begin to lift as you watch the action, and before you know it you've been watching them for half an hour. While imagining how much fun it would be, you wish that somehow you could get involved too. But the question you ask yourself is... how?

If you haven't guess it, the answer is simple: CLUB SPORTS. The Erb Memorial Union Club Sports Program at the University of Oregon is a great way to get involved in competitive recreational sports. It is designed as an athletic alternative to the existing intramural and intercollegiate programs. There are lots of reasons why everyone (including you) should participate in the Club Sports

program. Here's just a few:

1. **Anyone Can Participate-** U. of O. Club Sports are designed to be available to any male or female who wants to play and compete, regardless of level of expertise. Beginners are more than welcome!



2. **Variety-** There are 27 different sports to choose from, ranging from Baseball to Waterpolo, Ice Hockey to Ultimate Frisbee. Included as well are three new clubs which have surfaced this year: Billiards, Scuba and Footbag (hackey sack).

3. **Meeting People-** Since you are all sharing a common interest, Club Sports can be an excellent way to meet people and make new friends.

4. **Good Exercise-** If anything, join a club sport for the work-outs. It keeps your body in shape, your mind healthy, and is a lot more exciting than running laps at Hayward Field!

5. **Collegiate Competition-** Despite not

being U. of O. Varsity sports (such as football and golf), Club Sports allow you to experience the thrill of competing against other universities.

6. **Travel Experience-** Being a member of a Club Sport most likely will include lots of travel to cool places! Last Spring, the Women's Waterpolo team alone got to travel to Berkeley, Santa Cruz, and Claremont, California for different competitions!

7. **Relieves Stress-** We all know that exercise can help to relieve different types of stress. Participating in Club Sports can be a great way to diffuse the stress of school, which may in turn help you to better organize your study time.

8. **Team Participation-** The basic philosophy and key to the success of Club Sports is the student involvement in the coordination and administration of the programs. What this means is that all the work is done strictly on a volunteer basis by coaches and coordinators. The club decides exactly how they want to implement funds and which competitions they want to compete in. The best thing about this is that it allows every member to get involved with all aspects of the club's direction.

9. **Cool T-Shirts and Sweatshirts-** Depending on how your team decides to spend its money, you may just end your season walking around campus wearing some groovy clothes!

10. **It's Just Good, Plain, Fun!**

Well, there you have it! Ten great reasons to get involved with the EMU Club Sports Program! What? You still need to know how??? THAT'S EASY!

Stop by the EMU Club Sports office (located downstairs across the courtyard from the ASUO), and check out the bulletin board for information on phone numbers, times and dates. You can also call Sandy Vaughn (EMU Club Sports Coordinator) at 346-3733.

## Excessive exercise can be unhealthy

By Krista Holst



WARNING: Exercise may be hazardous to your health! Contrary to what some of us may believe, it is possible to get too much of a good thing— even when it comes to exercise. Many

of us have known for years that we need to be more active since simply walking to and from the shower each morning does not constitute an acceptable exercise plan. While some people think of exercise as a dreaded chore, others devote many hours a week to their physical activity of choice. Although some of us may perceive these dedicated exercisers to be models of ultimate health and fitness, we are now learning that by over-exercising, these individuals may be putting themselves at risk for developing health problems. What really happens when we exercise too much? And how much exercise is enough?

As many of us push ourselves in our exercise regimes, striving for that firmer, thinner, and curvier body, we are driven by the "more is better" theory which encourages us to do that one last sit up and run that extra mile. This excessive physical demand which we put our bodies through can lead to some effects which are far from beneficial. For both male and female athletes, sore muscles and stress fractures are just two of the less serious results of excessive exercise. In women, however, amenorrhea (the loss of the menstrual cycle) and a loss of bone mass are two of the more serious effects which may develop in those who consistently exercise for long periods of time at high levels of intensity.

The main goal of many women's intense work-outs may be to lose unwanted pounds and to

reduce excess body fat. If this sounds familiar and you have similar desires, then I have but one suggestion. Remember the word MODERATION. Although exercising intensely day after day may seem like an easy way to "lose the flab," it is definitely not the healthiest solution. Overdoing exercise not only puts strain on your joints, muscles, and heart, but also may cause your weight and percentage of body fat to drop to unhealthy levels. Combined with high intensity exercise, low weight and low body fat may contribute to hormonal changes within the body which can lead to amenorrhea.

Although some women may dream of the day on which they no longer have to deal with their "monthly cycle," this is not a positive way to rid yourself of it. Many important hormones are involved in the menstrual cycle and each plays a critical role in health maintenance. Estrogen is one of these hormones and aids in protecting and preserving bones. Consequently, amenorrhea and the lack of estrogen cause the bones of some women to be unprotected and at risk for wearing down. Dr. Beatriz R. Olson, of the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, has found that some amenorrheic athletes have a bone mineral density similar to some older, post-menopausal women. A twenty-two-year-old athlete, for example, may have the same bone density as a woman three times her age. Unfortunately this condition cannot be fully reversed since the majority of the body's bone mass is constructed before the late twenties. These particular young women are then very susceptible to becoming victims of osteoporosis in later years. Osteoporosis, which is common among older women, is a condition in which the bones become

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### For Your Information

FREE Cholesterol Screening every Tuesday from 9:30-11:30 a.m. in the Health Education Room across from the Pharmacy (Bring your student I.D.).

Be a Peer Health Advisor—call 346-4456 or 346-2728 for more information.

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