Gardening in Miniature: Enjoying Gardening in any Space

The next Stroke Club Meeting is Tuesday June 21st, at 7:00pm at New Hope United Methodist Church at 4525 Beaver Ave., Des Moines. The church is accessible.

This month our speaker will be Karen Moss.

Karen is an Occupational Therapist with Younker Rehabilitation at UnityPoint-Des Moines. She will be speaking about the trend of Fairy Gardening and Miniature Gardening. This is a popular type of gardening that can be done on a small scale in a container or in your yard. You will be learning about different plants to use in your fairy garden. You can decorate the garden as inexpensive as you want by making decorations or you can buy premade decorations and kits. Traditional gardening may be a bit more difficult following a stroke, but fairy gardens can be enjoyed by anyone as they are often planted in a container. The limits are truly only your imagination!

Come learn about this fun and easy style of gardening!

As a reminder if you have something special you would like to see in the newsletter please don’t hesitate to let me know.

My phone # is (515) 241-8139.
My email address is sue.toaleknapp@unitypoint.org

Thanks, your Newsletter Editor,
Sue Toale Knapp.

If you are afraid you will forget to call, do it now!! Please call no later than 9:00am the day before the meeting and preferably the Friday before the Tuesday meeting. This will allow Amy enough time to schedule a ride for you.

You will receive a call before the meeting regarding who will pick you up the night of the meeting. We have several volunteers who are willing to provide you a ride to Stroke Club.
Aphasia Group

The Aphasia group meets the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month from 12:30-1:30p.m.

The group meets at Mercy Riverside, which is located to 501 SW 7th St. Suite Q, Des Moines, IA 50309. Sue Fagg, Speech Language Pathologist for Mercy Medical Center is the group leader. Interested persons can call Sue at 515-643-9818 for more information or directions to the facility.

Stroke Camp

Des Moines University Department of Physical Therapy is sponsoring their annual Stroke Camp August 22-26, 2016. The camp is an elective course for the Doctor of Physical Therapy students. The camp will run daily from 8:30a.m.-3:00p.m. and will include individualized therapy for each of the volunteer ‘patients’ with stroke. There is no cost to attend the camp.

How will you benefit by volunteering as a ‘patient’?

1. Testing as to how you move and function will be completed the first and last day of camp. The results will show how you have improved during the week and may be shared with your physician.
2. Enjoy the camaraderie of others with stroke
3. Serve as a ‘teacher’ for the physical therapy students, making them better clinicians for their future patients
4. Leave with an updated home exercise program
5. Benefits from a week of fun
6. Improve your walking, endurance, and function. Past participants have made amazing progress during the week.

Please consider volunteering for Stroke Camp. Anyone who has had a previous stroke (no matter how long ago) and is willing to work hard and attend each day is welcome. Unfortunately transportation is not provided. If you are interested or need additional information please contact: Kathy Mercuris, PT,DHS at Kathy.mercuris@dmu.edu or 515-271-1734. Please respond by July 22, 2016.

A Father’s Day Salute

June 19th is Father’s Day and I would like to wish all fathers and father figures a wonderful day. For those of you who whose fathers are no longer here, I hope you have great memories to hold close in your heart.

F.A.T.H.E.R.S.

“F” aithful.
“A” lways there.
“T” rustworthy.
“H” onoring.
“E” ver-loving.
“R” ighteous.
“S” upportive.

Author Unknown
Daily Napping Could Help Save Your Life

by Damiana Corca

Napping improves alertness, mood and performance. But what if daily napping could help save your life? Research shows that midday sleep is associated with lower 24-hour blood pressure and supports healthy lifestyles. Plus, history’s got a host of famous nap lovers, from Einstein to Edison! So, why do we think napping is only for kids, the elderly and the sick?

One possible reason is that our modern society carries a stigma that napping is for lazy people. After all, a busy schedule may mean that you are highly successful — conversely, a break in the day for a nap could be seen as weakness. But, I dare you to try napping regularly for 15-20 minutes at a time and notice the inspiration, productivity and alertness!

Here are 3 types of naps that you could consider:

1. Emergency napping — when you are in a situation where it is a danger to your life not to, such as driving or working with dangerous machinery. Don’t try to push a little longer to get home. Pull off the road and get to a safe area to take a short nap. If you are falling asleep at the office, don’t just write one more email — stop and take a power nap.

2. Planned napping — when you know ahead of time that you’ll need to or want to be awake later one night, or if you’ve got a planned daytime activity that demands your highest functioning. This type of occasional napping is done without necessarily feeling sleepy.

3. Habitual or daily napping — when you nap pretty much every day at around the same time. Most adults do this after lunch.

If napping is done at the right time for a short period of time, it can also be helpful for insomnia. For those suffering from insomnia, the more exhausted you are the harder it is to fall asleep and stay asleep. Napping can relieve states of chronic exhaustion caused by insomnia and other sleep disorders. In addition to napping, approaching your particular insomnia depending on the time of the night you are waking up, could also help you sleep better.

The National Sleep Foundation recommends looking at napping as a mini-vacation within each day. The perfect time for one is between 12pm and 3pm for about 15-20 minutes. Put a timer on for 30 minutes so you can relax and not worry that you might be oversleeping.

In Chinese medicine, it is thought that even the act of laying flat for 30 minutes in the middle of the day can be beneficial. So if you think you can’t nap, simply rest. One day you may be surprised to notice your body relaxing enough to actually doze off for a few minutes!

Reference: www.huffingtonpost.com
Easy Memory Boosters

Expert strategies that will keep your mind in tip-top shape

By Karen Asp

The Psychologist says: Refocus your fitness routine

Exercise has been shown to protect memory, but some workouts may be better than others. In a Journals of Gerontology study, adults 55 and older who practiced yoga three times a week for eight weeks had better working memory capacity (being able to recall, say, all eight items on your grocery list) than those who strength-trained or stretched. The attention to mind and body during yoga may carry over to daily activities, improving your focus.

Neha Gothe, PhD, assistant professor, kinesiology, Wayne State University, Detroit

The Alzheimer’s Expert says: Prioritize weight loss

When overweight postmenopausal women shed about 18 pounds, activity in regions of their brain responsible for episodic memory – being able to remember events in the past like your first day of school – changed for the better, according to Swedish research. Plus, excess weight, especially in midlife, has been linked to an increased risk of dementia later. One possible reason: When you’re holding on to extra pounds, your heart may not pump blood as efficiently to the brain, which impairs your cognition.

Heather M. Snyder, PhD, senior director, medical and scientific relations, Alzheimer’s Association.

Reference: Woman’s Day Magazine March 2016

The Pharmacist Says: Check your medicine cabinet

Some prescription and over-the-counter drugs cause memory issues such as an inability to think clearly or loss of short term recall. Medications to watch out for include antidepressants, sleep aids, antihistamines, muscle relaxants, heavy duty painkillers and statins. If you’re talking one of these, talk to your doctors about switching to another option or reducing your dose, which can combat forgetfulness.

Sherry Torkos, RPh, pharmacist, Fort Erie, Ontario
“Laughter and tears are both responses to frustration and exhaustion. I myself prefer to laugh, since there is less cleaning up to do afterward.” — Kurt Vonnegut

Laughter is like a breath of fresh air that we desperately need. This seemingly simple act affects most of your body systems. Laughter strengthens the immune system by stimulating your body to increase production of immunoglobulin. It improves your heart rate and circulation by boosting the oxygen supply to your brain. Laughter controls pain by decreasing muscle tension, distracting attention, and increasing the production of endorphins, natural painkillers. Laughter is like giving yourself an internal massage as it stimulates and soothes. It truly is medicine for the heart.

Sometime when we feel inept, like a duck out of water, in our efforts to care for our loved one, the healthiest way to respond is to laugh at our own imperfections. We are human and at times say the wrong thing, spill soup down the front of the patient’s shirt, or mess up at the most inopportune moment. But if we can’t laugh, all we do is cry.

Humor, like prayer, helps us to rise above our circumstances. Seven years ago the idea of laughter was difficult for me to apply to the care of my terminally ill husband. Because I had worked as a registered nurse for over forty years, I was much too intent on fixing the symptoms of his illness and controlling his reactions to the chemotherapy and radiation. I was increasing not only my stress level, but also his.

Then as we turned on the TV and radio to some of his old favorites — “I Love Lucy,” “Abbot and Costello,” “All in the Family,” and “Mayberry RFD,” along with the music we grew up with, we began to laugh. Tensions faded, muscles relaxed, pain was lessened and we reconnected. Laughter reminded me that one is much more than his or her illness. We are all persons first, still alive and able to enjoy levity. Joy is still possible for the patient and the caregiver.

Try keeping a journal of humorous things you see, hear or read. Place cartoons on your refrigerator or bulletin board. They will be there when you need them. Avoid negative people. Don’t put yourself down. Call someone today to arrange to meet for a few hours to renew your spirit. It truly will be medicine for your heart.

A sense of humor can help us overlook the unattractive, tolerate the unpleasant, cope with the unexpected, and smile through the unbearable.” — Moshe Waldoks

Jane E. Maxwell is a Registered Nurse and hospice volunteer. She has cared for hundreds of patients over her forty-year career, many with terminal illness. She was a caregiver for her husband and other loved ones for several years. She is the author of the book, “Lifelines for Caregivers.”

Reference: Caregiver.com
Rhythms to Restore You

Music can help you get through almost any challenge

When you need a pick-me-up, help relaxing after a hard day or even a distraction from pain while working on a project, turn on some music.

Music activates the limbic system, the “emotional brain,” which controls emotions, memories and the senses.

This triggers the release of neurotransmitters and hormones that can influence our sleep cycles, moods and other factors that contribute to a range of physical and emotional benefits.

Research suggests music may especially have benefit for people with osteoarthritis or fibromyalgia, according to a meta-analysis published in 2015 in the Journal of Clinical Rheumatology. Studies showed improvement in stress, depression, heart rate and pain.

Mood Music

Just how the music helps you may vary, depending on what you listen to. For instance, soothing songs with melodic progressions from low to high notes may be the best tension-reducing tones, according to research in the Journal of Music Therapy. Other research, published in Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport, indicates rhythms between 120 and 140 beats per minute aid endurance and motivation during exercise.

Playlist for Pain

A meta-analysis published online last year in The Lancet found that music helps reduce patients’ post-operative pain and use of analgesics, no matter what kind they listen to.

Music helps change pain perception by taking a person’s focus off of what hurts, say music therapist Kimberly Sena Moore, an assistant professor in the Frost School of Music University of Miami in Florida. The key to maximizing these benefits is to listen to what you love, she says.

52%—How much the level of pain dropped in people who listened to 20 minutes of relaxing music a day.—Journal of Advanced Nursing, 2003.

Create a Playlist—Find music to suit your mood or create a playlist with one of the many free apps available. Songza, Pandora and iHeartRadio are some that offer music from curated stations, while apps like Spotify or Google Play Music allow you to choose from existing playlists or create your own.

Update from the April Speaker

At the April Stroke club meeting, Ginni Peterson, PT with UnityPoint shared her time and expertise. Her presentation was titled: “Your Feet are Your Foundation—How Stable is Your Foundation?”

For those of you who could not attend here is a handout she provided:

Tips for finding the proper shoe:
1. Go to a store that SELLS shoes
2. Get fitted!!
3. Try on shoes after you’ve been active – not typically first thing in the a.m. unless you have been up and walking.
4. You need ½” between the longest toe and the end of the toe box.
5. Change shoes every 300-400 miles or if they show excessive wear even sooner.
6. Buy shoes based on fit not brand.

The question came up with regard to needing 2 different sizes of shoes when you need to wear an AFO-foot brace. If you do need to purchase a larger size pair of shoes you can remove the liner from the shoe needing the AFO and flip it over to fit in the non-brace shoe to add padding and fill space.

Someone else suggested wearing 2 pairs of socks in the larger shoe.

There is a company that can accommodate the need for 2 different sizes of shoes.

NATIONAL ODD SHOE EXCHANGE
POB 1120
Chandler, Arizona USA
85244-1120
http://oddshoe.org/contact.php

Again we would like to thank Ginni for joining us and sharing her expertise.

A REMINDER OF WHAT YOU WILL FIND AT STROKE CLUB:
• Friendly people, like you, who have survived a stroke
• Care providers of stroke survivors: wives, husbands, sons, daughters
• Rehabilitation professionals: PT’s, OT’s, Speech Language Pathologists, Social Workers, Recreational Therapists, Nurses and Rehab Administrators
• A large lending library of books, videotapes and home therapy materials
• Great Door Prizes!!

Online Support Group
For those of you looking for an online support group here is a website for you: http://www.strokenetwork.org/.
It is a very active group. You have to join like a listserv and you post a question or issue and the group will email you back suggestions. Everyone in the group has survived a stroke and has great ideas they are willing to share.
Words of humor

A CAT GOES TO HEAVEN

A cat dies and goes to Heaven. God meets him at the gate and says, ‘you have been a good cat all of these years. Anything you desire is yours, all you have to do is ask.’ The cat says, ‘Well, I lived all my life with a poor family on a farm and had to sleep on hardwood floors.’ God says, ‘Say no more.’ And instantly, a fluffy pillow appears.

A few days later, 6 mice are killed in a tragic accident and they go to Heaven. God meets them at the gate with the same offer that He made the cat. The mice said, ‘All our lives we’ve had to run. Cats, dogs and even women with brooms have chased us. If we could only have a pair of roller skates, we wouldn’t have to run anymore.’ God says, ‘Say no more.’ And instantly, each mouse is fitted with a beautiful pair of tiny roller skates.

About a week later, God decides to check and see how the cat is doing. The cat is sound asleep on his new pillow. God gently wakes him and asks, ‘How are you doing? Are you happy here?’ The cat yawns and stretches and says, ‘Oh, I’ve never been happier in my life. And those Meals on Wheels you’ve been sending over are the best!’