



Your

Healthy & Happy Home News™

From the Desk of Roy & Pam Wood

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Watch Your Health Improve before Your Eyes

If you catch a runner or cyclist glancing at his or her wrist, it's probably not a time check. Chances are this exerciser is wearing a wristband that notes heart rate, distance traveled, and calories burned. It probably will tell time too, but that's likely not important to the runner or the cyclist at the moment.

From discreet bracelets to showy watches, wearable fitness devices have taken the world of workouts by storm. Amateur exercisers and professional athletes alike are donning these devices to help them achieve activity goals. Specific designs vary greatly, but the general function of fitness devices is universal: they help people get F.I.T.

Fast: A quick glance or button-push provides easy access to information. Fitness devices typically track heart rate, calories, distance, and activity. Wearers can easily see how many steps they've taken in a day, the route they ran, or the distance they swam.

In touch: These devices have empowered people to take control of their health. With access to more information, users are always in touch with their performance, their abilities, and their limitations. Wearable fitness devices can provide helpful reports to doctors and help the user set and monitor health and fitness goals.

Tech savvy: As fitness-device technology has advanced, so have the possibilities. Some now offer music storage, multidevice connectivity, and multiple data feeds. Users can now pull up progress charts, move with music, and even forward alerts from their phones.

Now, if we could just get them to do the workouts for us.

It's a Strange Old World: Bizarre News You Might Have Missed

Three California men were recently arrested for an unusual theft – \$300,000 worth of avocados. The men, who worked at an avocado packing and shipping company, were reselling them for less than retail.

Long-distance runners looking for their next challenge might consider registering for the world's 'coolest' race – the North Pole Marathon. The race takes runners through 12 laps of a 4.22-km (2.6-mile) loop on the frozen Arctic Ocean.

One Amtrak passenger, whose train was delayed for hours found a creative solution to his hunger: order pizza. A local pizzeria agreed to deliver the pizza to Mitch Katz, who documented the delivery on Twitter.

An Irish village was delighted when a beach that had been swept away by storms in 1984 naturally reappeared this past spring, giving the area a major tourism boost.

Cycling in the Urban Jungle? Three Things to Consider

Experienced cyclists in most big North American cities will tell you two things: one, biking is the best, most efficient way to get around, and two, it can be quite dangerous.

In fact, most cities don't have an extensive network of bike lanes, and drivers often encroach on cyclists' space or open their doors without looking. But it's not all one-sided; many cyclists either don't know—or ignore—the rules of the road.

Want to bike happily and safely in big cities? Consider the following:

Think like a driver

Cyclists still have to follow the laws and the etiquette of the road. Safe-driving behavior—stopping fully at stop signs, signaling, yielding, and looking around you—apply to cycling too.

Respect your fellow cyclists

Leapfrogging other cyclists, following too closely, and not giving plenty of notice of turns or stops can all cause accidents that could send you and other riders flying onto the curb, or worse, into vehicle traffic.

Take up your space

As Andrew Small noted in a recent *CityLab* article, cyclists have the right to a lane even though they're slower. It's safer because "... it gives a bike much more visibility to drivers." If cyclists hug curbs or stick close to parked cars, they're putting themselves in harm's way. But note: while this is true in most jurisdictions, there may be exceptions, and regardless, many drivers find this hard to swallow, which may put cyclists at further risk.

Mutual respect is the answer. So, as the yellow road signs suggest: Share the Road.



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Joanne O
Lethbridge, AB

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Carmen G
Lethbridge, AB

Worth Quoting

This month, some quotes on the subject of health and wellness

Eliminating the things you love is not wellness. Wellness feeds your soul and makes you feel good.

Iman

If we are creating ourselves all the time, then it is never too late to begin creating the bodies we want instead of the ones we mistakenly assume we are stuck with.

Deepak Chopra

The ability to be in the present moment is a major component of mental wellness.

Abraham Maslow

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How to Cut Your Electricity Bill without Really Trying

It's fall—a good time to take a fresh look at your bills to see if you can reduce them. For example, try these tips to cut your power usage and lower your electricity bills.

Switch to LED bulbs. About four times more energy efficient than incandescent bulbs, LEDs last for years. The “lumens” number indicates the amount of light emitted; use this to compare bulbs.

Install a programmable thermostat. With this device, you can automatically adjust the temperature to reflect where you are in your day—busy at home, away at work, asleep, etc. It keeps your home comfortable when you're there and reduces energy use when you're out.

Unplug unused electrical devices. All electronic devices sip small amounts of electricity even when they are not in use.

Use timers and power strips to turn

electrical devices on and off. A power strip with an on/off switch can block the charge going into the strip itself as well as anything plugged into it

Lower the temperature on your hot water heater. A hot water heater accounts for about 14% of energy usage in a typical home. Turn the temperature down when you're not at home and up when you're doing laundry or bathing. You can also install a water heater blanket to hold the heat.

Last but not least, air seal your home to prevent drafts around doors and windows, and ditch that old power-hungry refrigerator in your garage that's only chilling a few cases of soda.

Now you can relax and enjoy saving!

This Month's Sudoku

							9	3
4		8	7			5		2
		2			8			6
9	3			2		4		
		7		9		3		
		6		4			5	9
8			9			6		
6		9			1	2		5
1	5							

Millennials' Homeownership Dreams Can Come True

Money in a bank account doesn't earn a robust return in today's lower-interest-rate environment, but savings accounts still serve an important purpose.

These savings act as a safety net in case of emergencies, but in that case, you might ask, how much should you keep in that account?

According to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, which conducts a regular survey on the topic, the average amount an individual will need to resolve a crisis is \$2,000.

But that refers to an "average" individual. Those who experience emergencies may actually require more, depending on the emergency and the state of their finances.

As well, crises don't always come one at a time. For example, a car breakdown might be followed by an illness that prevents you from working. You may want to prepare for several crises happening at once

Are you concerned about a major crisis, such as losing your job or seriously injuring yourself?

Or are your concerns simpler, such as replacing an older car or needing home repairs?

Answers to these questions will help clarify how much you'll need for your savings account to be well funded.

Also evaluate your support system. If you're single, have a stable job, and have parents who can help out in a pinch, you

may not need as much in savings.

If you are the sole breadwinner in a five-person family and your income is based on commissions, you may need more.

So, while \$2,000 is the minimum amount you should consider in funding your "emergency" account, you may want to aim much higher.

Clearly it's not easy. The Federal Reserve Bank has estimated that only about 67% of Americans would be able to scrape up \$2,000 if necessary.

If you don't fall into this category, it may be time to revisit—or start—an emergency savings fund. Your financial professional can help.

Weightlifting Isn't Just for Bodybuilders

It's time to destroy the myth that resistance training (also called weight training) is only good for bulking up. The truth is – whether you use weights or your own body as resistance – it's probably the best form of exercise for overall health and wellness.

According to Brad Schoenfeld, an assistant professor of exercise science at Lehman College, weight training is the way to strong bones. As we get older and generally more sedentary, we lose bone tissue faster. The result is weakness and posture problems, Schoenfeld suggests in a recent article in Time magazine. Strength training stimulates the development of the cells that can rebuild bone. Don't worry about hefting large amounts of weight. As long as you're working hard, it doesn't matter how much (or how little) you lift.

Weight training also significantly lowers the risk of both type-2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Concludes Mark Peterson, assistant professor of physical medicine at the University of Michigan: (Strength training) "seems to be one of the best predictors of survival." And is now recognized as a "seminal part of general health and well-being at all ages." So start lifting!

Speedy Drones Can Save Your Life

Drones are coming for you. And, if you're having a heart attack, that's a good thing. Researchers in Sweden have found that drones can reach people four times faster than ambulances. Speedy responses can considerably increase the chances of surviving a heart attack.

In a study, drones were dispatched to 18 simulated heart attacks within a six-mile radius. So were ambulances.

The drones took an average of 5 minutes

and 21 seconds to arrive. The ambulances took 22 minutes.

The Swedish Transport Agency certified the trial drones, which were equipped with a GPS, high-def camera and defibrillators. A paramedic can give instructions to bystanders on how to use the defibrillator via phone or the drone's microphone-speaker system.

Grilled Zucchini Kabobs

Serves 6

6 tablespoons crumbled feta cheese
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 lemon, zest and juice
2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint leaves
4 medium zucchinis, cut crosswise into 1 inch pieces
1 red onion, cut into 1 inch pieces
2 teaspoons vegetable oil
Lemon wedges

Directions

Preheat grill on medium-high heat.

In a bowl combine the feta, olive oil, lemon zest and juice, and mint. Set aside.

Toss the zucchini and onion with the vegetable oil and season with salt and pepper to taste. Thread vegetables onto skewers, alternating the two.

Grill on lightly oiled rack for about 6–8 minutes or until tender and slightly charred.

Transfer vegetables to a platter and top with the feta cheese mixture. Serve with additional lemon wedges.

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Worth Reading

The 35 Words You're (Probably) Getting Wrong

By Harold Evans
The Guardian

Remember learning to use words in context at school? Apparently, not so much; many of us are using words incorrectly. Take, for example "affect" and "effect." Suggests editor Harold Evans: "You can only affect something that already exists. When it does, you can effect, or bring about, a change in it." This could be "less" than you need to know, as "fewer" and "fewer" of us are getting it right.

More:
<https://tinyurl.com/On-writing-speaking1>

Too Many Exclamation Points!!!

By Faith Salie
cbsnews.com

We need to have a serious discussion about our punctuation use. Now! Why? Exclamation marks are taking over writing, and we don't know why! Salie suggests we're using exclamation marks to express emotions we used to convey with our voices. That was BT (before texting). Exclamation marks are supposed to convey that something is urgent! Or important! But not everything is. So let's use periods more often.

More:
<https://tinyurl.com/On-writing-speaking2>

John Grisham's Dos and Don'ts for Writing Popular Fiction

By John Grisham
The New York Times

Wannabe writers: Here's some advice. It's simple. Writers must write. Every day. Preferably at the same time in the same place. And they need to write for the reader: simple words are best, and don't introduce too many characters at the start. Most importantly, you can break the rules, but only once you're really good.

More:
<https://tinyurl.com/On-writing-speaking3>

Into Solar? Your Social Media Friends Will Soon Know

If you're planning to install solar panels on your roof, your friends will soon know, thanks to Google's "Project Sunroof."

As Google explains, Project Sunroof is a free online solar calculator that helps you map the potential savings from converting your roof to solar. Its objective: to map earth's solar potential "one roof at a time."

Panels that absorb the sun's energy and convert it to heat or electricity are covering rooftops around the globe, encouraged by any number of factors including financial (solar energy can be a cost-effective way to generate electricity) and now peer pressure. The newest addition to Project Sunroof shows a red dot on homes that appear to have solar panels.

According to Robinson Meyer in a recent CityLab post, it "will now not only inform

users how much sun hits their roof, or how much solar panels would save them per month, but also which of their neighbors have taken the plunge first."

Why is that important? Writes Meyer, "One of the best predictors of whether people install solar panels on their house isn't their age, their race, their level of income, or their political affiliation ... It's whether their neighbors did it first."

Google is hoping take-up numbers will be driven by the desire to be the first in one's social media network to hop on the new bandwagon.

And that could swell as more "influencers" opt to participate and bring their followers along.

So check out Project Sunroof, install, and just wait for the online accolades.

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This month's *eTrivia* question is...

Why are squirrels credited with planting thousands of trees?

a) Left behind nests b) Forgotten seeds c) Forgotten Acorns

General Knowledge Quiz. Answers below.

What unfortunate trait do gorillas and humans share?

Elephants can do what unexpected activity very well?

What does a kangaroo use its tail for?

Why do sea otters hold hands?

(Answers: Both can catch colds; swim; balance; to avoid drifting apart when they sleep)