



HEALTH HUB

VARIOUS WAYS TO MOVE

APRIL
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WELCOME TO

◆ The April Health Hub

Various ways to move!

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We are now well into March into May, and I'm sure you all are out there getting your steps in. But most importantly, I hope you are out there moving your body and having so much fun doing it.

It is kind of hard to believe that it's already April. It feels like just yesterday we were setting New Year's resolutions. How are those going for you, by the way? Have they remained the same? Have you made adjustments? I hope you are still working at them and are feeling successful. I know a lot of people tend to set goals around movement and if data trends are correct those can be easy to fall out of.



If you have found yourself needing to make adjustments but are not sure what to do, don't stress. There can be a number of reasons for that and hopefully this will help. I have noticed that I love moving my body, and doing the same thing day after day can be effective for consistency, but also can get a little boring. I then sometimes find myself plateauing or getting bored causing my workouts to be less fun and effective.

I think it's important for us to remember that our bodies and minds need different stimuli at different points in life, and that's okay. I have found myself trying all sorts of things over the years, and sometimes I'll love them for months to years at a time and then I move on and do something else for a while, knowing I can always come back.

Activity Switch Up

WHY IS IT GOOD FOR US AND WHY WE OFTEN DON'T DO IT?

Switching up activities can actually be amazing for our mind and body. I guess I was onto something it turns out, with trying new activities. Did you know diversifying your fitness and movement routine can:

- **Improve Brain Health and Neuroplasticity**(the brain's ability to adapt and change), by releasing Brain-Derived Neurotrophic Factor (BDNF), a protein that supports neuron health, growth, and the formation of new neural connections.
- **Protect the hippocampus against age-related decline.** Specifically aerobic exercise increases the volume of the hippocampus(the part of the brain responsible for converting short-term to long-term memory, and emotional regulation), which is critical for memory and learning, and protects it from decline as we age.
- **Provide a cognitive boost.** A single session of varied exercise can instantly boost dopamine, serotonin, and norepinephrine, leading to improved mood, focus, and memory.
- **Prevent the body from adapting to a single routine** ensuring continued improvements in fitness and strength.
- **Reduces Injury Risk** by preventing overuse injuries caused by repetitive stress on the same joints and muscles.
- **Improve cardiovascular health,** strengthen the heart and improve circulation.
- **Prevent boredom,** keeping exercise engaging, which helps maintain long-term, consistent participation.





But with all these benefits...why don't we try new movement patterns and activities? Do any of these reasons cross your mind when you are thinking of trying something new?

- I don't want to pay for a new gym membership.
- I'm comfortable at my current gym, studio, park, home gym.
- I wouldn't know where to start...
- The other people doing this activity are skilled and seem intimidating.

If you experienced these thoughts, you are not alone. Many of us are with you. These thoughts hold many of us back from trying new things. If I may at this point share my story...

Cody's Journey

Throughout my journey I've experienced growth and realized how important taking care of myself is for physical, mental and emotional health. As a kid and teen, I had poor habits and made lots of excuses for myself... trauma, asthma, that's just how my body is, you name it and I went with it.

Until I met a friend/roommate who unknowingly and unintentionally changed my life. He took care of himself, he was a great friend and encouraged me. When I decided to start exercising, he allowed me to rely on him for accountability while I formed good habits of my own. We were only roommates for 2-3 months, but it was the start I needed. Over about 6 months, my body, mind, and ability to take care of myself had changed drastically. I felt better than I ever had before, and I had developed a mindset that I could accomplish difficult things. From there, I found myself doing all sorts of things. I tried running for years. I ran my first, followed by many more, half marathons. I ran two marathons, and a number of Ragnar Relays. I got into spin classes, then yoga, then ran Spartan races, and triathlons. I found myself jumping from activity to activity finding a sense of adventure, challenge, and accomplishment in each new activity. I think we all know life gets crazy, and we get busy and it's impossible to be committing huge chunks of time to these activities constantly, so we have waves where we can do more or less. Last year I found myself in one of





those odd situations where I was in a position to somehow do more and less, as I had been laid off from a previous role. So I had free time but was being conservative with my resources. Anyone who has been in the job market in recent years can tell you it can be discouraging and my mental health was definitely slipping, causing my physical health to slip as well. Then I stumbled upon my current gym on a night it was free with a group I had found on Instagram. Little did I know it was what I needed. I debated whether I should join this gym for weeks before deciding it was a good use of my resources. I found a whole new and encouraging community. I reconnected myself with rock-climbing (something I hadn't done with consistency in many years). Not only that, I also found that the space had cool study/work areas, yoga classes, spin and fitness classes, and a full gym. It became my little sanctuary where I could change things up and be more connected to myself despite difficulties. Sometimes that is what we need. I faced a lot of those

reasons, that we tend to hold ourselves back - it could be finances, but I realized that investing in myself made me more capable of handling the waves of life. I definitely was not as skilled as many others there, but I put myself out there and people were kind and willing to help me improve. There were all sorts of classes that helped me get started, reacquainted, and breaking out of my comfort zone allowing me to grow in new and exciting ways. I found something I loved to do while also allowing me a huge variety of things I can participate in to stimulate my body and mind. This gym also has fun competitions and challenges where you can earn money toward gear for diversifying and trying new things which I love because it tends to offer a little extra motivation and rewards.

Now you may be thinking Cool Story Cody...But I'm not you, and this is not one size fits all, and this is what I say to that - you are correct and that is the beauty of it. We are all different, and may be naturally good or bad or interested or disinterested in any number of things, but we are alive and can try them all if we just step out of our comfort zones and don't allow ourselves to hide behind our reasons not to try something new. Do you have something you've always wanted to try? Do it! You're not too old, you can find time if it's important to you, there is a class for your skill level, and the people will probably be nicer than you think. So, give it a try, it may not change your life, but it also just might. *Fun suggestion* take a friend with you, it's less intimidating that way and maybe it's something that they may enjoy too.

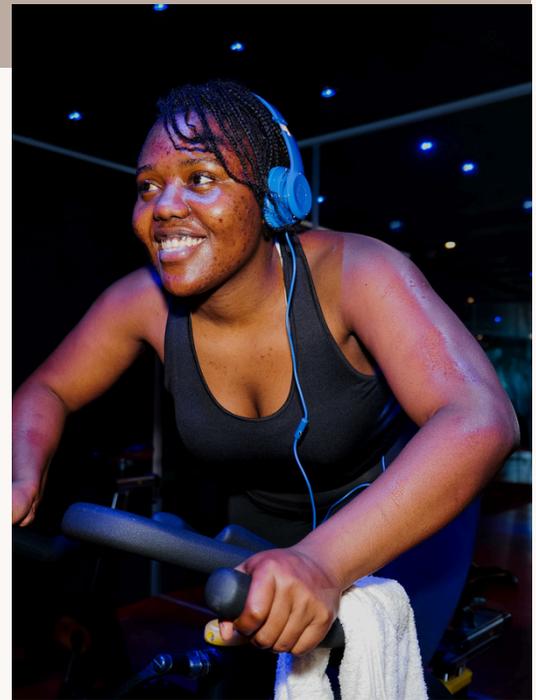
Need some Ideas?

CAN'T THINK OF A GOOD WAY TO SWITCH THINGS UP?

We are fortunate enough in Salt Lake County to have tons of cool activities to try. As employees of this county there are lots of activities available at rec centers that you can check out too. Here are a few ideas to start your brainstorm.

- Rock climbing
- Zumba
- Spin
- Pilates
- Ice skating
- Martial arts
- Yoga
- Gymnastics
- Paddleboarding
- Kayaking
- Hiking
- Aerial Silks
- Kickball, dodgeball or pickleball
- Rollerskating
- Cross country skiing
- Fencing
- Dance

Now is your time, give it a shot. Many of these can be found all around the community. Many offer free intro weeks and classes or some just cost the rental equipment. Just get out there and try and remember you don't have to be amazing right out of the gates. Give yourself time, have fun and if it's not for you that's okay to try another thing until you find what is for you.



Tried Something New?

WE WANT TO HEAR ABOUT IT.

Did you try something new and have a great time? We want to hear about it. Snap a pic and send us an email we want to celebrate with you and share in your adventures and successes. Did you do it as a team? Even better. Let us know by sharing it with us!

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