

FISHY FIXES

Staying Healthy with Dr. Aieta, N.D.



Dr. Aieta,
I heard that taking omega-3 fish oil as a supplement can be beneficial for many different health conditions. Could you explain how they work in the body and how much you would recommend on a daily basis for overall good health?

Paul G.

A proper balance of omega-3 fats and

omega-6 fats are needed for optimal health. Omega-3 fats, found in fish and fish oil supplements, can reduce inflammation, while omega-6 fats, which can be found in nuts, seeds, and animal products, can increase it.

When too many omega-6 fats are consumed, and not enough omega-3s, the body can be put into an inflammatory state, which can lead to conditions such as cardiovascular disease, arthritis and cancer. The problem is that the standard American diet contains heavy amounts of omega-6 rich oils like soybean, safflower, corn and sunflower and not enough omega-3 oils. An ideal ratio of omega-6 to omega-3 fats in the diet should be 3.5 to 1, while most Americans have a ratio of more than 16 to 1.

Because so much of the fish we consume is contaminated with heavy metals, I have patients consume fish just once or twice a week, so supplementation with

omega-3 oils becomes crucial. Using a quality brand of fish oil is also important to ensure that it is purified of contaminants.

The product that I use in my practice is pharmaceutical grade and is tested for purity. Increasing one's omega-3 intake can improve heart and artery health, lower blood pressure, maintain healthy cholesterol and triglyceride levels, assure good blood sugar and insulin control, optimize brain function, improve skin, improve arthritis and reduce all types of inflammation.

In my practice, I have seen patients improve in all these areas with the introduction of fish oils to their diet. The typical dosage of fish oil that I recommend is around 1200 milligrams twice a day as maintenance, and up to 5000 mg a day for patients with more severe health conditions, such as arthritis and cardiovascular disease. At the 5000-mg dosage, I have seen arthritis patients stop taking anti-in-

flammatory medications because their pain resolved within a month's time. I've also seen cholesterol levels improve just as quickly.

So, if you are looking to improve your overall health and your diet is not ideal, taking fish oil on a daily basis is one of the best things you can do. To ensure that you get a quality product, make an appointment with a naturopathic physician who can recommend one for you.

Dr. Frank Aieta is a board-certified and licensed Naturopathic Physician with a private practice in West Hartford, Conn. He specializes in the treatment of disease, using natural therapies such as acupuncture, homeopathy, spinal manipulation, clinical nutrition, and herbal medicine. If there is a specific topic you would like to see addressed in an upcoming column, you can e-mail him at DrAieta@aol.com, or visit www.DrAieta.com for additional information.

CARDIO COUNT

Women's Fitness with Lisa Thomas

It almost doesn't seem worth it to count your calories when doing cardio, straining through hours of sweat. But regardless of how much of a hassle it may seem, counting calories is necessary to look and feel your best.

The amount of calories burned during exercise is determined by your body weight, the intensity of the workout and your conditioning level and metabolism.

There is no "best" cardio workout. In fact, the best cardio exercise is simply the one you will do consistently. Choose something you enjoy doing and don't be afraid to mix it up. Interval cardio work consists of moving from one exercise to another in set time intervals. For example, you could do the elliptical trainer for 15 minutes, then switch to the stationary bike for another 15, then finish off on the treadmill for the last 15. Interval training is a great way to keep everything fresh.

It keeps me from getting bored.

There are two schools of thought when it comes to cardio training. These are the "slow and steady" and "high intensity" groups, each of which comes with its benefits.

Slow-and-steady cardio training is long in duration, anywhere from 45 minutes to more than an hour. It's low intensity, burns fat and not carbs, and it helps preserve the joints. Slow and steady does not

mean "Read a book while walking" – that is called a stroll in the park.

High-intensity cardio training is short in duration, anywhere from 20 to 45 minutes. It could even include intervals of different types of training. High intensity burns tons of calories and revs up your metabolism throughout the day, and you could mix your cardio with weights and body weight explosive movements. This is my favorite type of workout.

While I personally see the most results with the high-intensity training, I need to give my body that slow-and-steady break from time to time.

I suggest you try both and track your progress with a journal to see which one works best for your body and see if you are losing body fat.

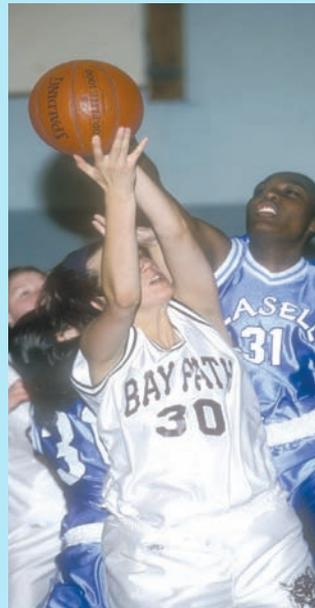
There's a lot of great cardio equipment out there, and I personally use a variety of them – anything from treadmills, jump ropes and bikes to stair steppers and more. Get your cardio in at least three times a week, and watch your calorie intake and output.

One note on cardio equipment and calories burned: Many cardio machines don't ask for your weight and tell you that you're burning X number of calories.

The number displayed is for a person of average weight (usually average is 150 pounds). For many people, the number of calories is overstated. So, if the machine

doesn't ask for your weight, don't believe the number of calories displayed.

Lisa Thomas is a personal trainer/fitness coach in the Greater Springfield area, as well as owner of Thomas Fitness Center and Fit Kidz of Massachusetts. Contact her at (413) 426-5543 or t.fitness@hotmail.com, or visit www.thomasfitnesscenter.com.



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