

New Year's Health Resolution for Men

(12/12/2014 AZ Republic by Dr. Harold Wong)

It's the Holiday season and an American tradition is to make New Year's Resolutions. The most common resolutions are to lose weight, quit smoking, and get healthier. This article will comment on a recent real life situation.

Back Injury: A couple attended my seminar about a month ago and came into the office for their free consultation. Two weeks later, his leg got numb; gave way; and he fell to the ground. She drove him to the hospital where he spent two days. She said they had been gardening, and he lifted some big rocks and small boulders, but lifted from the back and not with his legs.

I have known many people with back problems and there are some standard things one can do. The first is getting more and the right kind of exercise. Back pain can be caused by: tight hamstrings, tight quadriceps, weak abdominals, and weak back muscles. One wants lean, flexible muscles and joints and not heavy bulky muscles (typical of football players and body builders).

Dr. Wong's prescription: Because the couple lives at a senior manufactured home community, they have access to all sorts of facilities and classes. We know that insufficient exercise is a common problem in America, leading to overweight issues; higher blood pressure and cholesterol; and a weaker heart-lung system. I suggest that you do various modalities of exercise, ideally in a class setting with music, so that it's fun. This way you look forward to your next exercise activity instead of dreading it.

I suggested that his significant other, a nurse, take control of his short-term rehab and long-term exercise program. They should alternate: yoga and Pilates classes for flexibility; water aerobics because there's little stress on the joints; daily stretching and back exercises, even if only for 20 minutes; and learning ballroom or some other type of dancing. On the weekend, going to dance lessons or the traditional Friday or Saturday dance becomes a fun event, with music and other people enjoying themselves. It's easy to fit right in and enjoy the scene.

Chiropractor Care: I've had a back problem for almost 30 years, caused by my extensive competitive sports and tennis career. So, I've gone to the chiropractor for 30 years. A good sports chiropractor was the quickest way to get me back into competition. The normal family practice MD prescription of RICE: rest, ice, compression, and elevation, is medically sound. But RICE does not get you back on the field of competition, whether your injury is to your shoulder, leg, or back. Instead of just going to my chiropractor when I had an injury, such as my back going out, I started going on a regular basis for prevention. If you take your car into the mechanic for regular oil changes and maintenance, why not take your body into the chiropractor office for regular adjustments?

Massage Therapy: In 2005, I discovered the AZ School of Massage Therapy, which has two locations, Tempe and Phoenix. To my surprise, it was so effective that I only have to see the chiropractor twice that year. I go virtually every weekend. The price is very affordable, with \$25 cost for a 50-minute session. However, one can buy multiple certificates at up to a 50 percent

discount. The clinic is open on Saturday and Sunday and massage students work on clients to practice what they learn in the classrooms. If you get the better students, the experience is great.

Summary: The easiest way to improve one's health is to do a variety of activities that build strength, flexibility, and endurance. If you do these with a workout partner and they are fun, your odds of continuing with the program increase substantially. Remember, your health is as important as your wealth!

Contact Dr. Wong at (480) 706-0177, haroldwong1@yahoo.com, or www.drharoldwong.com.
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