



Thankful for Health

Article written by Ann Fenton, (ann.fenton@unl.edu),
Extension Educator.



During the holiday season, we often think about the many things for which we are thankful. It might be family, friends, or a good job. It may also be our ability to keep ourselves healthy by eating good food and partaking in physical activity. Here are a few more ways to think about being thankful for health and physical activity.



- If you are able to do physical activity outdoors, you might be thankful for the clean, crisp air that allows you to breathe. Walking outdoors in the sunshine increases your exposure to Vitamin D, which promotes calcium absorption, bone growth, immunity and decreases inflammation.
- Exercising reduces stress by releasing your body's endorphins which elevates your mood. People who engage in regular physical activity have fewer heart attacks and strokes, lower blood pressure and higher levels of HDL (healthy cholesterol) than non-exercisers. For some, it also improves quality of sleep and keeps you energized.
- Maybe you are thankful that physical activity helps you to maintain a good weight. Physical activity, especially walking, can be free and is relatively easy to do. By enjoying physical activity, we are able to strengthen the heart and lower disease risk. It also tones the arms, legs and torso. During the holiday season, you might be especially thankful for physical activity when you feel like you have eaten too many desserts, and now have a way to work those extra calories off.
- As you exercise, you might be thankful that you have a good friend to go with you. Maybe you have a spouse or child that likes to go and talk about their day. To be surrounded by friends and family and to be able to forget the stresses of the day may make you grateful for all you have.
- While you are doing physical activity, you can take a few minutes to think of all the things that make you thankful. By doing so, you can live a healthy life.

Family Fun on the Run is a monthly newsletter designed to help families add physical activity to their already hectic schedules.

For more information check out Family Fun on the Run:
<http://go.unl.edu/familyrun>

Sources:

1. 5 Great Reasons You Should Take a Walk Today, Cleveland Clinic - Health Essentials:
<http://cle.clinic/1SDUMUK>
2. 8 reasons why walking is great for your health, Tesco Living