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Three Steps to Preparing Your Body for Summer

By Marjorie Geiser

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Summer isn't too far away. It's almost time for shorts, tank tops, and bathing suits. Time to prepare the body for not only looking good in such few clothes, but preparing the body for the effects of the heat and sun. Three important steps to this preparation include exercise, eating foods high in antioxidants, and drinking plenty of water.

The National Weight Control Registry and a Consumer's Report survey of 32,000 people both show that people who have lost significant amounts of weight and kept it off have all followed some consistent guidelines, which has included regular exercise, eating lots of fruits and vegetables, following a low fat diet, and eating primarily healthy fats.

The advantage of regular exercise not only includes weight loss, but more important is that consistent exercise results in body fat loss and development of muscle tone, which shows most when clothes are skimpier. This improvement can be felt quickly, as the muscles are worked and get used to the demands made of them. When you feel more fit, you start to hold yourself up, stronger and prouder. Posture improves and you just look better, overall. For someone who has not been exercising regularly, after a quick checkup by your doctor, simple walking can be a great way to get started! But, in order for it to be effective, you have to do it on a regular basis; at least 3-5 days a week. When just starting out, 3 days a week of 20 minutes per walk may be plenty. It may even be a challenge at first! If you keep it up, though, shortly it will get easier. As it gets easier, progression to 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week will be more effective. If someone started walking 4 miles per hour (15 minutes per mile) for 30 minutes, 5 days a week, they will start burning roughly an extra 1500 calories a week. Although this will only result the loss of a few pounds in 10 weeks, the increase in your resting metabolic rate will also increase with regular exercise. Your resting metabolic rate is how many calories you burn at rest. The higher your metabolic rate, the more calories you burn when just sitting! So, without even changing the way you eat, you're already working towards some weight loss.

This brings us to the second step for preparing the body for summer, which is making some changes to the diet by increasing your intake of fruits and vegetables. There are three advantages to a diet high in fruits and vegetables; 1) these foods are rich in antioxidants, which help protect the skin from the

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harmful, oxidating effects of the sun and toxic chemicals from the hot air, 2) they also have been shown to help fight against heart disease, cancer and obesity, 3) finally, they will fill you up on fewer total calories because they are high in fiber and bulk. If a person were to eat 5–10 servings of fruits and vegetables per day, which is the recommendation of many health organizations, today, they would feel fuller on fewer net calories by the end of the day. Theoretically, they could end up eating 200–500 fewer calories per day, which further helps with weight loss. Plus, you would feel better, your hair, skin and nails would look better, and you would become more `regular'.

The final important step to preparing for summer is to increase your intake of water. Sixty percent of our body is water. Studies have shown that a diet adequate in water helps with weight loss, helps moisten skin, decreases dryness, can help prevent the development of wrinkles, keeps the hands and lips moist, can help fight heat exhaustion, and even has shown to decrease bladder cancer in men.

Although there is a lot of debate over just how much water each of us needs, a good individual rule of thumb is to drink enough water so that your urine is clear by the afternoon. Worry about staying up all night going to the bathroom? Then drink most of your water in the first half of the day. Don't like water? Then experiment with various temperatures of plain water, or add a slice of lemon or orange to your water. Perhaps you can find a flavored (not sweetened) water. Even eating a diet high in fruits and vegetables and getting plenty of other fluids can be adequate for some, because these foods and other fluids also provide free water for the body's needs.

Now is the time to start getting ready for summer! It's not too late. If you start on these steps now, you'll be well on your way to feeling great, looking great, and be prepared for a new you this summer, strutting your stuff in those brand new shorts that are sitting in your closet.

Marjorie Geiser has been teaching health, fitness and nutrition since 1982. She is a nutritionist, registered dietitian, certified personal trainer and life coach. As the owner of MEG Fitness, Marjorie's goal for her clients is to help them incorporate healthy eating and fitness into their busy lives. You can learn more about Marjorie from her website, www.megfit.com, or contact her via email at margie@megfit.com.

Formulate A Summer Skincare Plan

By News Canada

(NC) – Avoid a summer beauty crisis by properly preparing skin for the warm weather. Summer skin care dilemmas are two-fold – increased dryness due to water loss, wind and sun, as well as increased oil production from outdoor sports and heat. Preparing the face and body for increased outdoor exposure will aid in preventing an onslaught of summer skin dilemmas.

Summer moisturizers should feel light and weightless on your skin. For face, use an oil-free moisturizer that contains a sunscreen. A good product to try is RoC® Retinol Actif Pur Day SPF 15.

Water remains key. Eight, 8-oz glasses a day is the minimum required. Herbal teas can also be

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substituted for water. These fluids help detoxify the skin and keep it looking moist and dewy.

If you're conscious about cellulite, the use of a body contouring cream such as RoC® Body Contouring Triple Action can help eliminate the appearance of cellulite on thighs, buttocks and hips. While waiting for results, try using a sunless tanner to help conceal cellulite, which tends to be less noticeable on darker skin.

Vitamin supplements are important in maintaining healthy skin. Flaxseed oil is a popular choice as it is good for the skin, the heart and it is also an anti-carcinogenic.

Stock up on fresh fruits, vegetables and green salads, which help to replace fluids. Adequate fluid intake helps to keep the system well flushed and removes toxins and wastes. This, in turn, helps keep the skin clear and problem-free.

Looking to rid skin of post-shave bikini line bumps? A simple and effective cure is chamomile tea bags. First, cleanse the area with soap and water. Then lie down and place cool, damp tea bags over the irritated skin. Chamomile contains anti-inflammatory properties, so it is very calming on the skin.

Choose the appropriate sun protection for your skin type. For those with sensitive skin, a good product to try is RoC® Minesol® SPF 40 – with 100% mineral filters and a rub-proof, water-resistant formula, it's proven to guard even the most sensitive skin against sun damage.

Don't forget to use sunscreen on hands. Hands are exposed to the sun year round, and are the first place on the body to show signs of aging. These signs are often visible in the form of dark spots and sagging skin.

Walk barefoot. It's a good form of massage, helping to strengthen foot muscles, energize aching and tired feet and acts as a natural pumice.

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