

# Body & More

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HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE  
TO LOSE WEIGHT?  
GAIN STRENGTH?  
GET RACE-READY?  
HEAL A SPRAIN?  
HERE'S  
WHAT  
YOU'RE  
IN FOR

# HOW LONG?

**PLUS**  
Know  
your  
genetic  
heritage

**BRINGING UP  
THE REAR**  
Tone and tighten  
for beauty and health

***The caregivers' workout***  
It's gotta be about you  
before it's about them

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### The caregivers' workout

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## DRINKING HAS HEALTH BENEFITS, BUT ...

First, the good news: Moderate drinkers get healthy benefits from alcohol, which acts as a blood-thinner, resulting in lower rates of heart disease, says a study published in the journal *Alcoholism: Clinical & Experimental Research*.

Now the bad news: The same blood-thinning benefits expose drinkers to higher rates of bleeding-type strokes than nondrinkers.

“The contrasting effects of alcohol are similar to the effects of blood thinners like aspirin, which clearly prevent heart attacks but at the expense of some additional bleeding strokes,” says Dr. Kenneth Mukamal, an internist at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center. He based his results on data from 3,798 people enrolled in a long-term study of heart disease risk factors.

“Acting as a blood thinner makes sense because heart attacks are caused by blood clots that form in clogged arteries, and blood thinners can hasten bleeding from injured arteries.”

Mukamal warns against using this revelation to overimbibe: “By themselves, these findings have more importance for understanding risk factors for vascular disease than any clinical relevance, and should not be used by people as any reason to begin drinking.”

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## Are we programmed to gain weight?

Severely obese people are programmed for fat, says a study published in the journal *Cell Metabolism*.

In studying the muscles of lean and obese people, Duke University Medical Center researchers found muscles of the obese were laced with fat and burned fat 43 percent slower than those of the lean patients. They also found that muscle “bears a metabolic memory of obesity,” which makes it difficult to maintain sustained weight loss, despite diligent calorie-cutting efforts.

The good news: Exercise can override this “aberrant metabolic” programming. Specifically, exercise can reverse the elevation of an enzyme linked with obesity when present in high amounts.

“While these findings may be somewhat discouraging for those wishing to reverse obesity through dietary interventions, they also highlight the importance of exercise,” says the medical center’s Deborah Muoio, who authored the study.

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## SMOKING FOR DUMMIES

Long-term smoking clouds the brain, slowing your ability to think and lowering your IQ, say University of Michigan researchers who tested the mental proficiency of 172 alcoholic and nonalcoholic men.

In a quest to determine the long-term effects of drinking on thinking, researchers found that long-time smokers suffered memory problems, a decreased ability to solve problems and lower IQs. Even when accounting for alcohol use, smoking still

proved damaging to the brain.

The link between smoking, drinking and brain function hasn’t been studied enough, although 50 percent to 80 percent of alcoholics smoke.

While more studies need to establish a solid cause and effect between smoking and brain power, “perhaps it will help give smokers one more reason to quit and encourage quitting smoking among those who are also trying to control their drinking,” says lead author Dr. Jennifer Glass, a University of Michigan psychiatry professor. © Content That Works



## BOUNCING BACK TAKES TIME

Can't snap out of it after a cold, flu or other illness? That's normal as you age, according to researchers at the University of Illinois.

Feeling rundown for a prolonged period intensifies as we grow older, says Dr. Rodney Johnson, an integrative immunology and behavior researcher in animal sciences. In Johnson's studies with mice (whose response to medical phenomena mirrors that of humans), older rodents recovering from infections suffered decreased appetites, weight loss and less social interaction.

Why? It basically boils down to the brain being slow to inform the rest of the body. Cells called microglia facilitate healing but can overreact: "The exaggerated response can lead to a more intense and longer-lasting sickness behavior syndrome," he says.

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## Nature vs. nurture: A REMATCH

People are genetically programmed to be attracted to people who are like them, shows a University of Western Ontario study of identical and fraternal twins.

When choosing a spouse or picking friends, individuals tended to zero in on people who were "compatible with their genotypes, such as outgoing people preferring other outgoing people, or traditionalists favoring other traditionalists.

"If you like, become friends with, come to the aid of and mate with those people who are genetically most similar to yourself, you are simply trying to ensure that your own segment of the gene pool will be safely maintained and eventually transmitted to future generations," says the study by J. Philippe Rushton and Trudy Ann Bons, published in the journal *Psychological Science*.

Rushton noted that environment and timing also impact our choices in relationships. © Content That Works



## OLDER MEN AND THIN BONES DON'T MIX

Older men with Parkinson's disease have a greater risk of bone fractures, says a study published in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*.

In a study of about 6,000 men ages 66 and older, those with Parkinson's had lower bone mineral density in the spine and hip and had three times the risk of suffering fractured or broken bones than men who didn't have the disease. Parkinson's is a treatable, non-cur-

able nerve disorder that causes tremors, moving difficulty and balance problems, according to the study lead by Dr. Howard A. Fink, M.P.H. It is common with age and affects six in every thousand adults ages 65 to 69, and 30 in every thousand adults older than 80.

Researchers suggest older men with Parkinson's have their bone density tested and ask for ways to boost bone density with safe exercises and "appropriate doses of such bone-building nutrients such as calcium and vitamins D and K."

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# KIDS WITH ASTHMA CAN BREATHE EASIER

Little steps to reduce allergens at home offer big payoffs to kids with asthma, according to findings by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

Researchers targeted six major classes of allergens that trigger asthma symptoms: dust mites, cockroaches, pet dander, rodents, passive smoking and mold. Children were offered mattresses, box springs and pillow covers made of allergen-impermeable materials; air purifiers with high

efficiency particular air (HEPA) filters; vacuum cleaners equipped with HEPA filters; and professional pest control.

Kids who got environmental interventions had 19 percent fewer emergency clinic visits and a 13 percent reduction in inhaler usage, which delivers medication directly to the lungs. These kids also has 38 percent symptom-free days during the course of the two-year study that includes more than 900 city kids ages 5 to 11 with

moderate to severe cases of asthma. The simple environmental adjustments saved \$27.57 a day that would ordinarily have been spent treating asthma symptoms.

“These results show that tailored interventions such as these may have substantial long-term impact on asthma symptoms and resources use among inner-city children,” says Dr. David Schwartz, director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. © **Content That Works**

## Just face it, antibiotics carry risks

Acne sufferers treated with antibiotics face a bigger chance for upper respiratory tract infections, according to a study published in the Archives of Dermatology.

In a large-scale study, those treated with topical or oral antibiotics for more than six weeks were more than twice as

likely to suffer upper respiratory tract infections than acne sufferers treated by other means, according to Dr. David Margolis, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine.

Antibiotic overuse has long been a concern of researchers, who note that organisms develop

a resistance to antibiotics spurring an increase in infectious diseases. Because antibiotics are a common treatment for acne, the study authors said long-term use of the drugs in that population is a natural.

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# HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

*By Mark L. Furst  
Body & More*

How long does it take?

That's often the big question when it comes to losing weight, gaining strength, getting ready for a race or overcoming a sports injury.

Here's a handy guide revealing answers to some typical questions.



## HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE IN EXERCISE EACH WEEK TO LOSE EXTRA WEIGHT?

About five hours of weekly exercise may yield the biggest weight loss for overweight adults who are also watch their intake of fat and calories, according to John Jakicic, Ph.D., head of the University of Pittsburgh's Health and Physical Activity department.

Jakicic and colleagues studied nearly 200 overweight women for two years. Participants were told to consume 1,200 to 1,500 calories a day. Fat was to account for 20 percent to 30 percent of those calories. Those who lost the most weight reported logging 270 to 300 minutes of exercise a week, which is four and a half to five hours weekly.

Of the 172 women (90 percent) who completed the study, here are the average percentages of body weight lost by each group:

- moderate amount of moderate-intensity exercise: 4.9 percent body weight lost

- moderate amount of vigorous exercise: 3.7 percent body weight lost

- a lot of moderate-intensity exercise: 6.5 percent body weight lost

- a lot of vigorous exercise: 7.2 percent body weight lost

The results were presented in fall 2005 at the North American Association for the Study of Obesity's annual scientific meeting in Vancouver, Canada.



## HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO LOSE 10 POUNDS?

You can lose 10 pounds in 10 days if you do 45 to 60 minutes of daily aerobic activity at least five days a week and eat a diet that provides a minimum amount of food, 900 to 1,000 daily calories, says New York personal trainer Brian Heir.

Women can eat about 300 additional calories, and men about 500 more, and still reduce weight safely, although at a bit slower rate.

For those extra calories, have a piece of fruit or bread, a glass of skim milk or low-fat yogurt, or a low-fat, low-sugar dessert. The diet should provide 12 percent to 15 percent of calories from protein, 55 percent to 70 percent from carbohydrates, and 10 percent to 30 percent from fats. In addition, Heir suggests drinking eight glasses of water during the day.

"Most of the content of the foods we eat comes from water. When you are slightly dehydrated, your brain knows it needs water and sends out a hunger signal," Heir says.

"If you drink water throughout the day, you will only get hunger cues when you are truly hungry."



## HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO INCREASE STRENGTH QUICKLY?

You may be able to improve your strength more quickly if you lift weights more slowly. A strength-training technique known as Super Slow that involves very controlled weight-lifting movements may offer the most effective means of building strength, says Wayne Westcott, Ph.D., fitness research director at the South Shore YMCA in Quincy, Mass.

"A more sustained period of muscle tension may be the key factor for stimulating greater strength gains," Westcott says.

Because Super Slow workouts are more demanding, he advises new strength trainers to start with the standard eight to 12 repetitions at seven seconds each. (That's two seconds lifting, one second pausing, four seconds lowering.)

When you reach a strength plateau, then do six weeks of Super Slow training: four to six repetitions of each exercise at 14 seconds per repetition (10 seconds lifting, four seconds lowering) to go even farther. Go back to six weeks of standard training before engaging in another six-week period of Super Slow workouts.



## HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO GET READY FOR A RACE OR FITNESS EVENT?

If you want to get fit fast for an upcoming race or event, all you need is a month's time and the dedication to stick to your goals.

You will need to do cardiovascular training four to six days a week for 30 to 50 minutes and weight training two to three days per week, says Ken Baldwin, president of Premier Fitness, Inc., a personal training company based in Cambridge, Mass.

If you don't have any past experience getting into shape, Baldwin suggests hiring a qualified personal trainer and getting nutritional help from a dietitian. For your baseline, do one or two sets of strength-training exercises, using enough weight to feel fatigue after 12-15 repetitions.

Do a total body workout that involves all of the major muscle groups. Exercises that involve more than one joint, such as squats, leg presses, dead lifts, bench presses and pull-downs, are the best.

You can also use circuit training by moving quickly from one exercise to the next.

Or try split-body training that works different body parts on different days: day one, chest and triceps; day two, hamstrings and quadriceps; day three, back and biceps; and day four, shoulders and calves. For cardiovascular training, the ultimate goal is to go as long as you can as hard as you can.

Start using the hill or interval programs on exercise machines.

You will burn more calories and get more variety to get you through the doldrums.



## HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO RECOVER FROM A SPRAINED ANKLE?

Treat a sprained ankle right and you can be on your feet in a few days and back in action in a few weeks, says Dr. Allan Levy, team physician with the New York Giants. The best immediate treatment for an ankle sprain is RICE: rest, ice, compression and elevation. Rest your ankle immediately.

If you stay off the ankle until the swelling stabilizes, usually you can walk easily within a day.

Ice your ankle for 20 minutes or until it starts to feel numb, let it warm up and keep icing for 20 minutes on and off for two days or until the ankle returns to normal size.

Compress the ankle by wrapping it with an elastic bandage to limit swelling and bruising.

Elevate the ankle so that it's above your hips. As soon as you can, begin range-of-motion exercises to reduce stiffness and restore mobility. Using your big toe as a pointer, trace the capital letters of the alphabet from A to Z. Repeat every hour you are awake.

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# THE CAREGIVERS'

**By Mark L. Fuerst**  
*Body & More*

When Benna Golubtchik's doctor told her she needed surgery on her arthritic knee, she began searching for other treatments. "He told me it was age, that I had to accept it," says Golubtchik, a former New York City schoolteacher who now trains teachers.

She attended a stress management/fitness workshop run by Debbie Mandel. "I started taking better care of myself and doing the exercises," says Golubtchik, who's in her early 50s. "It took a few months until I felt better, but I was no longer limping or in pain. A change in attitude made me a little more active and gave me a lot more energy.

"And I didn't need surgery."

Making small changes in attitude and exercise, as Golubtchik did, is often all it takes to restore balance and take control of your busy life. Often, caregivers in the Sandwich Generation experience added stress because they're pulled between caring for their own kids and their aging parents. But forgetting to care about yourself is no way to care about the ones you love.

Fitness and optimism can give caregivers stamina and help slow down the clock on their own aging process. Arthritis, depression, anxiety, obesity, confusion, diabetes and cancer do not have to be part of growing older, says Mandel, author of the new book, "Changing Habits: The Caregiver's Total Workout" (Catholic Book Publishing, 2005).

The Changing Habits program stems from Mandel's experience as the caretaker of two parents with Alzheimer's

disease. She is the mother of three children, ages 5, 14 and 19, and also works full-time as a literature professor at Brooklyn and Queens colleges.

"I was so busy, I just went from one activity to another feeling fatigued," Mandel says. "I found that lifting weights could break up the nagging thoughts that I was not doing enough for my family. I began to feel grateful for what I had."

Many women's lives are shortened by giving away too much of themselves, Mandel says.

"They are overworked, absorb stress, eat to fill up emotionally and forget to take care of themselves. Not a healthy lifestyle!" she says.

Her program offers strategies and concrete tools to every woman who lives sandwiched between her children and aging parents, and to all women who are caught up in doing rather than being.

"Many women have lost their

personal identity," Mandel says. "Changing Habits is designed to create a healthy self-respect for body, mind and spirit."

With the help of trainer Frank Mikulka at the Hollywood Atrium Club in Lawrence, N.Y., Mandel developed an easy-to-follow, at-home, total body fitness program she calls Activity Alleviates Anxiety. Exercise sheds stress hormones and releases endorphins, the happiness hormones, she says. You begin to think more clearly and increase your ability to focus; you begin to feel more confident and stronger; it improves health and helps ward off chronic diseases such as high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity and high cholesterol levels; removes the fear of frailty that accompanies aging; and lowers the risk of cancer.

Mandel's mantra is to look at exercise as a lifeline.

"By exercising, we are exercising the right to make time for the self, get rid of toxic stress, release



the happiness hormones and, most important, generate the life-giving force that is our birthright," she says. "Exercise will extend your life and give you greater function, even stimulate your brain. After all, it is not about how long you live, but how much life there is in your years."

Mandel offers some simple guidelines when you are experiencing an energy crash due to bouts of intense busyness:

- Become aware of your feelings.
- Notice how uncomfortable you are.
- Make small changes gradually.
- Work out with a friend.
- Sign up for exercise classes in a gym or community center.
- Listen to music while exercising.
- Put on your sneakers and walk out the door. Sunlight will energize you.
- Buy a new pair of sneakers, fitness clothes, or a workout audio/video to help you get in an exercise groove.

■ Post motivating notes in your home, as a screen saver, or on the refrigerator.

■ Change your routine every four to six weeks to stay motivated.

"Your happiness and calmness are conveyed to others. Exercise will physiologically and spiritually restore your balance. Therefore, it is your moral obligation to exercise to generate positive feelings, which in turn transfer to others who will, in turn, pay it forward," Mandel says.

Golubtchik now exercises several mornings each week for about 30 minutes when she wakes up. "I use free weights, do squats and upper body strength training, and also do an aerobic workout and stretch. It certainly has made me feel better. I'm stronger, I have more energy and I can do more. It's not true that because I have arthritis I have to slow down."

More important, "a change in attitude has made me a little

more active and that has made a big difference. I walk more, take the stairs instead of the elevator and make sure I eat right," Golubtchik says. "I don't have to be a slave to the gym to feel more vital."

## CHANGING HABITS EXERCISE PROGRAM

In a short span, you can exercise several large major muscle groups by performing compound movements.

"Compound exercises also correspond more realistically to activities of daily living and will help you to function better with greater strength and balance," Mandel says.

The following three exercises can be done in about 10 minutes. Do these exercises two to three times a week.

■ Pushups (works the chest and triceps muscles and "helps open up the heart emotionally," Mandel advises.)

Do a set of pushups using the arm of a couch. Make sure the

couch rests firmly against the wall (at least on one side) so it does not slide.

In the starting position, keep back straight, abdominal muscles pulled tight and hands positioned directly under your shoulders, fingers facing forward.

Extend your body full length with your weight on your toes.

Bend your elbows as far as they will go and push back up to the starting position.

When you can do two sets of 12 repetitions easily, then move to the floor for standard pushups and build up to two sets of 12.

■ Having-a-ball squats (works almost all muscles and provides some cardiovascular benefit)

Place a ball on the floor in front of you and get into a squat position, heels firmly planted, behind the ball.

Bend down, pick up the ball and, still in the squat position, hold it in front of your chest for a second.

Then, pushing off your

heels, stand up and lift your arms as if you were placing the ball high overhead on an imaginary shelf.

Exhale on exertion.

Do a set of 10. Aim for two sets of 12. When this feels easy, use a weighted medicine ball.

■ Wall marches (works leg muscles and provides an aerobic workout)

Stand with your feet shoulder width apart and position your hands shoulder width apart lightly touching the wall in front of you for stability.

Hold your abdominal muscles tight.

Then lift one leg high to your waist, forming a right angle. Exhale on exertion.

Do alternate leg lifts.

Aim for three sets of 20 or more. When this feels easy, do wall marches in between the other two exercises.

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By Margaret Littman  
Body & More

They don't slice, dice or make julienne fries. But the odd-looking MBT sneakers - touted on TV's morning chatfest 'The View' and spied on the celebrity soles of Madonna, Angelina Jolie and Hedi Klum - promise to do almost everything else.

According to the catalog for Bliss, a New York spa that sells them, wearing the sneakers for one hour daily improves balance and circulation. Two hours a day improves posture and muscle tone in hips and thighs. A month of regular wear (including workouts) can reduce cellulite and lead to "abs an 18-year-old would envy." Can a sneaker really do that? Even a \$234 sneaker? Even a sneaker that comes with a training manual?

The full name of the shoes in question is "Masai Barefoot Technology," named after the indigenous people of East Africa known for both standing tall and for their nomadic ways. The Swiss-based maker of MBT (its U.S. offices are in Hailey, Idaho) boast that the shoes replicate the experience of walking barefoot in the sand, even when traversing hard sidewalks and parking lots that don't allow any give.

A thick, seven-layer sole provides a cushion and gives the shoes the slightly goofy look of moon boots. When Sally Brown inherited a used pair from her sister, she remembers wanting to wear them as much as possible because they were like "an amusement park" for her feet. Her husband teased her, asking if she was going to wear them to bed, she wore them so often.

"I think they're shockingly homely, at least my grey ones are... Still, I was so enchanted by them that, before going out to a restaurant, I recall wracking my brains, trying to figure out some way I could make them work with a skirt or anything moderately fashionable," Brown remembers.

Her shoes, the Grey Sport, are the line's best seller, and the thick sole with a fiberglass plate, rubber sole and heel sensors make them resemble therapeutic shoes more than Jimmy Choos. Newer models, like the Lifestyle, are a little more hip, but certainly are not sleek.

Kate Leydon, the owner of Chicago's Ruby Room boutique spa, wasn't spurred to

try them because of their looks, the promise of a dimple-free rear or because of the poetic nature of the shoe's name. Nor was it the study from the 2004 University of Calgary's human performance laboratory suggesting that there was some science behind the claims that the shoes increase muscle activity and reduce joint pain. (In addition to finding that the shoes did demand more of "lower extremity" muscles than traditional shoes, the study also found that wearers required 2.5 percent more oxygen consumption while walking, which helped increase the training effect.)

For Leydon feeling was believing.

"I have a lot of lower back issues and I was intrigued by the idea that the shoes might not allow dead energy to travel up the spine. I personally tried them and my back pain was completely eliminated."

At Ruby Room in Chicago, everyone on staff wears the shoes.

The shoemakers recommend new users take a training class to learn to walk properly in the shoes. Some retailers offer ongoing MBT exercise classes; others give shoppers a CD or video to follow along at home.

"For training, we just try to get people into the shoes, so they can experience where their weight will fall, and they get used to how they are built

## THE MYSTERIOUS CASE OF THE



THESE TRENDY, ODD-LOOKING SHOES COST MORE THAN A CAR PAYMENT AND PROMISE A NON-STOP WORKOUT. ARE THEY WORTH THE PRICE?

like a rocking chair. There is this continual rolling, instead of just hitting the ground with your heel first," Leydon says.

She says that once her gait adjusted to the shoes, she found her posture and walk improved, even when she was wearing other shoes.

Brown lives on a farm in O'Fallon, Ill. (across the Mississippi River from St. Louis, Mo.). When Brown lucked out and received her older sister's too small MBTs, she didn't have the benefit of a training session. She hadn't even heard of the shoes when she received them in the mail.

"I thought she had just picked up some shoes on sale and they'd given her the wrong size," Brown remembers.

"I'm sort of rabidly enthusiastic about exercise and athletic shoes, but also extremely frugal. I never spend more than \$29.95."

# Magic sneakers

So, Brown tried them on and watched the CD-Rom.

"Unfortunately, I can't say that I have lost cellulite," she laments, one of the most frequent first complaints from many who compare the shoes to their claims. "I have a very clear sense, however, that they make life much easier on my knees and joints."

Even the most trusting among us is aware that that truth in advertising is a relative term. Even with regulations and watchdog groups, none of us is naive enough to believe all we read, even when it comes to scientific studies. Part of what may make the shoes work for many, is that because they are comfortable, wearers are more willing to walk and exercise than they are in shoes that cause blisters or shin splints.

And, the more you exercise, the better shape your muscles

take.

In addition, the rocking shape of the sole makes it difficult just to stand still. Even waiting in line at the grocery store a wearer is likely to rock back and forth.

Says Brown, "All of a sudden, things like standing in line at the grocery store were actually kind of a kick."

Again, any movement that keeps your muscles going can help you feel more in shape. As for the cellulite, well, there still doesn't seem to be any way to get rid of that, even at \$234... other than having a photograph of your rear retouched.

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# THE BOTTOM LINE

*By David Jakubiak  
Body & More*

As a teenager, 69-year-old Sheila Cluff loved figure skating. She was good at it, too. So good that at 18 she toured internationally. But as she aged she moved away from ice.

Figure skating was a sport for the young. She went on to become a fitness expert and eventually opened The Oaks

**A PERKY REAR END IS A SIGN OF GOOD FITNESS. DON'T ACCEPT SAGGING AS INEVITABLE. HERE'S WHAT TO DO**

at Ojai, a California fitness and destination

spa. But when she started

taking one of her grandchildren skating six months ago

she learned her local rink had a senior skating group. "I

thought, well I'm a senior," she chuckles. "I didn't realize

the most senior ice skater was 35, but I became the senior

skater's grandmother." Now she's back in the game.

"I'm doing single jumps, tangos and waltzes. Nothing too advanced, but I'm having fun."

But after only a few times out on the ice something became very clear: "I could not have done it if I had not kept the glutes strong."

While not everyone on the cusp of their 70th birthday will rediscover their inner Peggy Fleming, Cluff's experience holds an important message, a toned butt means a lot more than filling out jeans. A great butt can help improve a person's self-confidence, make a person look younger, help a person get around and can even alleviate some kinds of lower back and knee pain.

## THE BOTTOM LINE

The gluteus muscle group comprises three main muscles: the gluteus maximus, the gluteus minimus and the gluteus medius. Together these muscles serve a wide range of functions, from serving as a foundation for our spine, to allowing us to walk up stairs.

"The gluteus muscle group is the biggest muscle group that keeps us standing tall," says San Francisco-based wellness consultant Julnar Rizk.

The butt helps to support our knees. "We have no muscle groups that support our knee joint along the sides of our legs," Rizk says. "The gluteus medius is the muscle that supports the lateral stability of the knee joint."

As we age many factors weigh on our butts - gravity pulls on them, connective tissue ages, genetic factors begin to take hold. But lifestyle has the greatest impact.

"Most of the time we are sitting. In a seated posture, our spines start to form in a position that shortens everything in the front. So muscles in the front of the hip get shortened and the muscles in the butt get lengthened. Lengthened muscles are atrophied muscles," Rizk says. And atrophied butt muscles can cause real pain.

"What I consistently see from people who suffer from lower back pain, and have suf-

## THE EXERCISES

There are many exercises to tighten the butt. Below are some recommended by Cluff, Rizk and Anastasia. Before starting any exercise program, check with a physician.

### HIP RAISES

Lay on your back with your feet flat on the ground about 12 inches apart and 12 inches away from your butt. Squeeze your glutes as firmly as you can and lift. Can also be used to work either side of the butt by lifting to the right and to the left.

### BUTT BLASTERS

Go down on your forearms and place your legs at a 45-degree angle. Lift the bottom of your shoe toward the ceiling.

### SQUATS

Sit in a chair with feet flat on the ground hip-width apart. Stand up. Keeping back straight lower your butt just above the chair, hold and stand up again. Repeat slowly to avoid knee trauma.

### LUNGES

Stand with one leg in front of the other. Keeping your back completely vertical, lower your back knee to the ground and push up. Do not allow your front knee to go in front of your front foot.

### BRIDGES

Lay on your back with knees bent and feet flat and pushing butt up in the air.

fered from lower back pain for a long time, is very atrophied butt muscles," Rizk says.

Conversely, "The pain that comes from having fatigued back muscles is alleviated by having strong butt muscles."

## BUTT HONESTLY

Lynn Anastasia, a Las Vegas-based fitness consultant, says there's only one way to a tighter, younger-looking, healthier butt: diet and exercise. "And you're never too old to start," she adds. "I have clients in their 80s."

Not everyone can be Jennifer Lopez, obviously.

"Certain people are just predisposed to deposit more fat in the rear end," says Cluff. "That's genetics. But if you're one of those people, you still want to tone that area and watch your body fat."

Anastasia agrees. "If your mother held her fat on her hips, then most likely you'll carry your fat cells on your hips." But, she adds, "if you do your fitness training with your diet, you can do something about it. If you overeat, the fat cells will take those extra calories, that's their job."

Understanding that all bodies are different means programs will work differently for different people, so patience with your butt is important.

It's also important to be clear on your motivation for trimming your rear. If all you can come up with is, "To fit into these jeans," or "To fit into this bikini," Anastasia warns, you could be headed for disappointment. Focus on real health issues and "Patience will come much more easily," she says. "An exercise program becomes so much easier if the reason for that program is more than vanity."

## SHAPING BOTTOMS UP

Before working on your butt, Cluff recommends this universal truth: "Everything is connected."

So, while spot reduction is impossible, that's not a bad thing. Most exercises that tighten the butt will strength-

en the hips, the thighs and the lower back.

Experts also recommend designing an exercise regime that holds real meaning.

Rizk suggests "functional exercises." For example, squats mimic the action of getting out of chair, which can be difficult for some people. Bridges are similar to the action of moving in a bed. Lunges are like getting up from a kneeling position. Cluff says exercises aren't the only way to a tighter butt.

"People not inclined to formal exercise can play sports that use those glutes. For me, that's figure skating. But it could also be jazz dancing, snow skiing, or tennis."

Consult a doctor before starting any exercise program. "Check with a doctor to make sure you are in the proper positions to avoid back pain. And if you can, work with a personal trainer," Anastasia says.

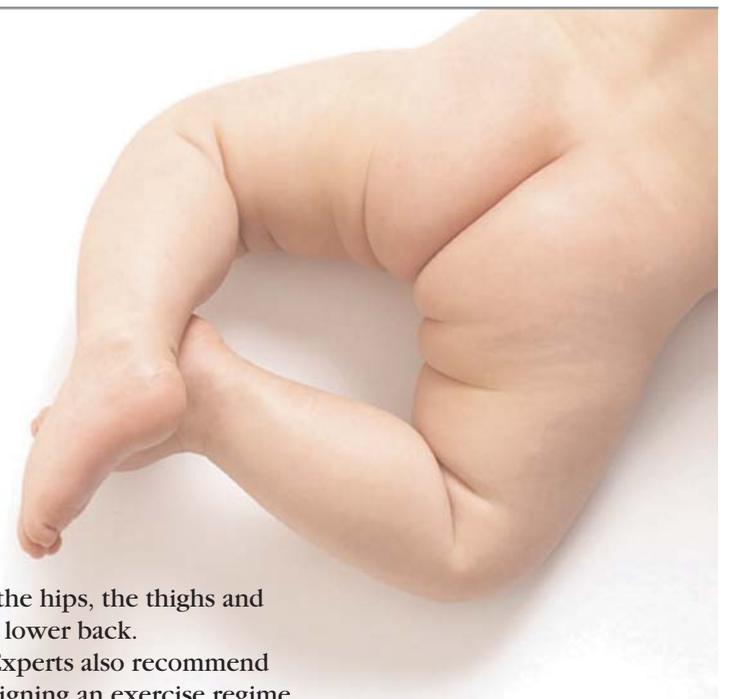
To Cluff, the benefits of a tight butt are innumerable. There are health benefits and vanity benefits. "We want to look just as good from behind as we do from the front."

Not to mention, shopping is more fun when you can find clothes that fit.

"It can be very discouraging when the designers design for the 20s and you're over 40," she says. "But the more toned you are the easier it is to find clothes that fit."

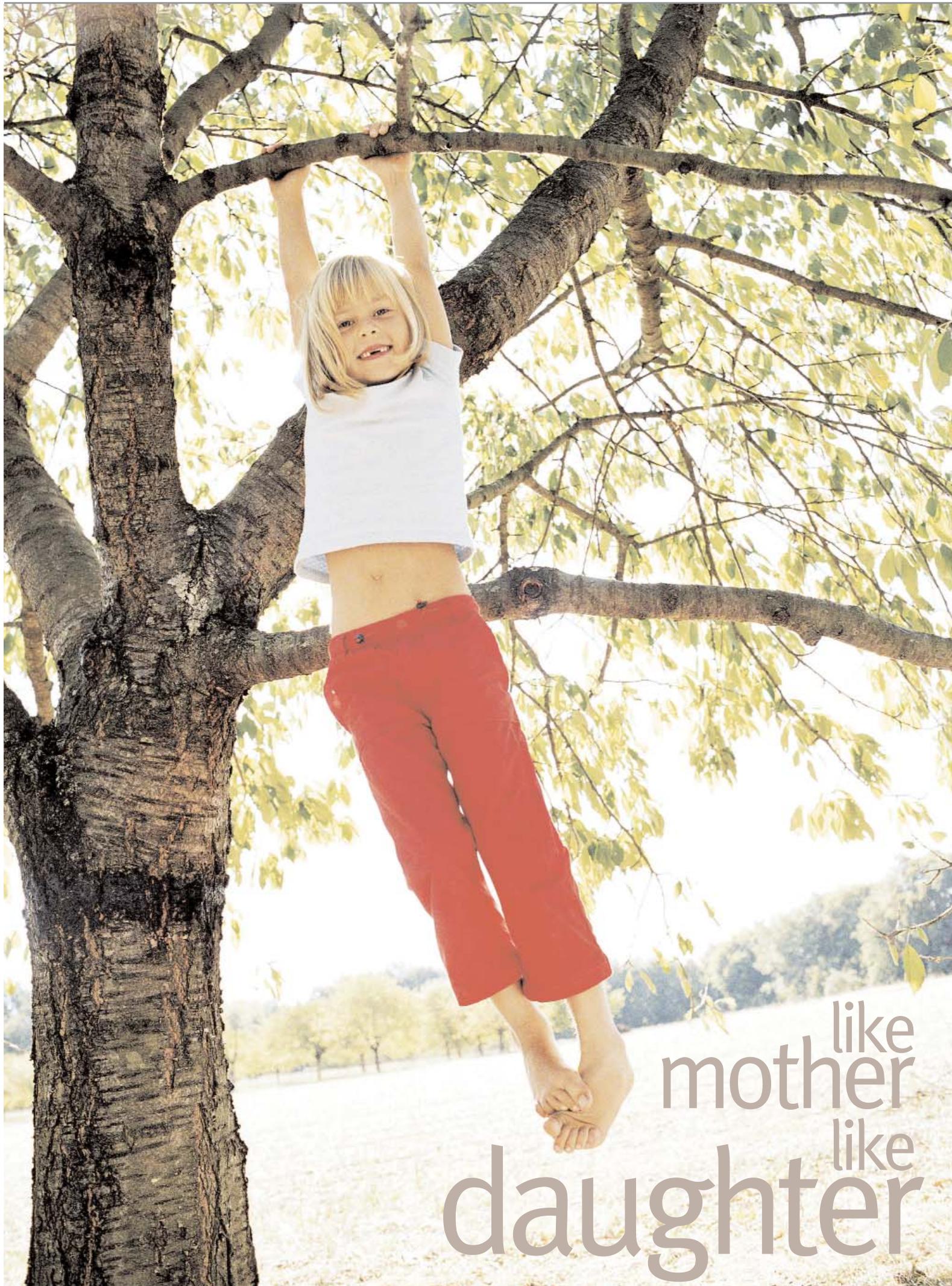
And she adds, "You build your own personal girdle when you strengthen those muscles."

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“WE WANT TO LOOK JUST AS GOOD FROM BEHIND AS WE DO FROM THE FRONT.”

SHEILA CLUFF, 69-year-old former figure skater fighting nature's push to take her toned behind



**BROWN EYES AND GOOD TEETH AREN'T THE ONLY THINGS PASSED ON THROUGH YOUR DNA. CREATING A FAMILY HEALTH TREE IS THE BEST WAY TO KNOW WHAT RISKS LIE IN YOUR GENES**

*By Margaret Littman  
Body & More*

When you think about the legacy you're leaving your kids – or your parents are leaving to you – your thoughts probably turn to the family business that sports your name, that sterling tea service or perhaps an aptitude for joke telling that makes you the star of every family reunion.

But what about your health legacy, that combination of genetics and acquired habits (good or bad) that can predict or dictate current and future health concerns? If you're old enough to read this, then you've filled out more than your share of medical history forms in the doctor's waiting room. Maybe you've even fielded a question or two from an adult child who wanted to know if Great Aunt Betty suffered from heart disease.

"You cannot change your genetic heritage. You can shape your lifestyle choices that can decrease the risk of illness. Knowing your family history is critical," says Vicki Rackner, M.D., an author of "Chicken Soup for the Soul Healthy Living Series: Heart Disease" (HCI, 2005).

Unfortunately, most people don't think about collecting or giving a detailed family history until serious illness prompts a panicked phone call. That means many of those forms completed while at the doctor's office are filled with blanks and half-attempts at answers.

Yes, something is better than nothing. But experts say accurately and completely documenting your medical family tree can be a valuable tool for helping your children and grandchildren prevent and treat disease. The average doctor's visit lasts just seven minutes, says Marie Savard, M.D., author of a workbook, "The Savard Health Record." Because of that, few patients get

like  
mother  
like  
daughter

the 20 minutes needed for their physician to take a detailed family history. That means they need to do it themselves.

"I think of a family history tree almost as a gift that you can give to every member of the family," she says. "You can make copies for all your doctors."

Savard has created a set of forms that can be downloaded online ([www.mercksource.com/pp/us/cns/cns\\_patient\\_resources\\_savard\\_form.jsp](http://www.mercksource.com/pp/us/cns/cns_patient_resources_savard_form.jsp)) to help start the process; an example of one can be seen here. Like any big project, staring at the blank form can be daunting. Savard suggests starting at home in advance, rather than waiting until you are at the doctor's office or when a family member has requested the information. Otherwise, you may be nervous and distracted.

#### DO SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF

Getting started is easy. Just like you did in fourth grade when you had to complete a family tree for homework, start with the most senior members of your family. Talk to parents and grandparents about what they remember about their medical history, childhood illnesses and other experiences. History on family members who are no longer living may be gleaned from talking to other relatives and looking through baby books, adoption and immunization records, family Bibles and letters. The National Society of Genetic Counselors suggests starting discussion at a family reunion or vacation, where family members are together and relaxed. It's difficult to bring up questions about illness and even death when families gather at a time of crisis. If there's no event coming up, e-mail the blank form to family members or enclose it in your annual holiday card and ask them to fill them out. In exchange, promise to send everyone a completed family health tree.

You can use a premade form, or make your own. Start by listing all family members from oldest to youngest. Enter names and dates of birth when known. With each relative, try to list as many aspects of a medical history as possible and be specific. Do not just write "cancer," if you know more. The kind of cancer and the age the relative was when that cancer was diagnosed can help your doctor determine

## FAMILY MEDICAL HISTORY TREE

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

**MATERNAL**



\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**PATERNAL**



\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**GRANDPARENTS**




\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**AUNTS and/or UNCLES**




\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**PARENTS**




\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**AUNTS and/or UNCLES**




\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**SIBLINGS**








\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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how much a risk factor that particular cancer is for you.

Christina Zaleski M.S., a certified genetics counselor at the Marshfield Clinic in Marshfield, Wis., cautions that you be as thorough as possible on both sides of the family, regardless of gender. Your father can't get ovarian cancer but that doesn't mean you can't inherit the risk from your father's side of the family.

Of course, genetics is not the only factor that can cause disease. Occupational history, socioeconomic status, eating and exercise habits also play a

part. Note whether a relative smoked, was under- or overweight, suffered from alcoholism or wore glasses. Body shape can be an indicator of heart disease risk for women. If that information is available for your female relatives, include it.

Once you've completed the research, don't just file it away in a drawer for a rainy day. Make copies. Give copies to your kids and grandkids. Make copies of it for the specialists you see. It is important for your cardiologist to know about health risks not directly related to your heart.

Those copies will also cut down on the forms you must complete when you see a new doctor.

No matter what your tree reveals Zaleski reminds her patients to keep perspective: "We all have a family history of something."

To learn more on collecting a family medical tree, go to the National Society of Genetic Counselors Web site, [www.nsgc.org](http://www.nsgc.org). For information on which diseases have a strong genetic component, go to [www.geneticalliance.org](http://www.geneticalliance.org).

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“ I THINK OF A FAMILY HISTORY TREE ALMOST AS A GIFT THAT YOU CAN GIVE TO EVERY MEMBER OF THE FAMILY.”

MARIE SAVARD, author of the workbook, "The Savard Health Record"

# Make room for 'SHROOMS

## IT'S THE ULTIMATE NUTRITION NO-BRAINER

By *Bev Bennett*

**C**ute as a button and very cultivated, white mushrooms are the ubiquitous addition to salad bars and top many savory spaghetti dishes.

Although you probably couldn't guess from its pale color or mild taste, the white button mushroom is proving its worth as a health-promoting food. White button mushrooms are very high in ergothioneine, a substance that may protect against oxidative cell damage, according to research from Penn State University.

That's a fancy way of saying mushrooms may help your body ward off chronic disease.

The common supermarket 'shroom may also be a potent cancer fighter. Mushrooms contain a plant chemical that

suppresses enzymes associated with the development of breast cancer, according to Shiu-an Chen, Ph.D., at the Beckman Research Institute of the City of Hope in Duarte, Calif.

Selenium is a mineral everyone needs, but it may be especially important for men. Harvard researchers found that men with high blood levels of selenium are half as likely to develop advanced prostate cancer as men with low blood levels. And, here's where mushrooms come in: they supply more selenium than any other item in the produce section.

Even if you're just keeping an eye on the scale, mushrooms should be on your menu. A cup of mushrooms contains only 20 calories, and is so satisfying that you're less likely to snack on high-calorie foods. Unlike some vegetables, mushrooms are appetizing whether served raw or cooked. When shopping, look for closed caps that feel firm and dry, not slimy. Store mushrooms in a paper, not plastic, bag in the refrigerator.

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### CHICKEN AND MUSHROOM PIZZAIOLO

- 4 (6- to 8-ounce) boneless, skinless chicken breast halves
- 1/2 teaspoon each salt and ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup olive oil, divided
- 1 small yellow onion, diced
- 8 ounces white mushrooms, sliced (about 3 cups)
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 1 (8-ounce) can tomato sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed dried oregano or 2 teaspoons chopped fresh oregano
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh Italian parsley

■ Season the chicken with salt and pepper

■ Place 2 tablespoons oil in a large skillet and heat over medium-high heat. Add chicken and cook until brown on both sides and center is no longer pink, about 15 minutes. Transfer to a serving platter and keep warm. Add remaining 2 tablespoons oil to skillet. Add onion. Cook and stir until translucent, about 5 minutes. Add mushrooms, increase heat and stir until lightly browned, about 5 minutes longer. Pour in wine and stir to scrape up any browned bits from the skillet. Add tomato sauce and oregano. Reduce heat to low and simmer, uncovered, until slightly thickened, about 20 minutes. If necessary, return chicken to skillet and simmer for 5 minutes to heat through. Sprinkle with parsley and serve.

■ Serves 4

### GRILLED LEMON SHRIMP AND VEGETABLES

- 1 pound large shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 8 ounces small white mushrooms
- 2 medium zucchini, sliced 1-inch thick
- 1 medium red onion, cut into 8 wedges
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano, crushed
- 3/4 teaspoon salt, divided
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 4 pita breads
- 1 cup plain low-fat yogurt
- 1 small cucumber, peeled, seeded and finely chopped

■ Preheat an outdoor grill or broiler until hot.

■ Place the shrimp, mushrooms, zucchini and onion in a glass bowl. For a marinade, combine oil, lemon juice, garlic, oregano, 1/2 teaspoon salt and pepper in a small bowl. Reserve 2 tablespoons of the mixture. Pour the remaining marinade over the vegetables and shrimp, tossing to coat. Set aside for 30 minutes. Arrange the vegetables and shrimp on a grilling or broiling rack. Grill or broil no more than 6 inches from heat source until vegetables and shrimp are just cooked, about 8 minutes, stirring often and brushing with reserved marinade. Spoon the vegetables and shrimp onto pita breads. Combine the yogurt, cucumber and remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt. Spoon over the vegetables and shrimp.

■ Serves 4

■ Note: To reduce calories, use 2 pita breads, cut in half for 4 servings.

### MUSHROOM RATATOUILLE

- 1 pound white mushrooms
- 2 large onions
- 1 medium eggplant
- 2 medium zucchini
- 1 large red bell pepper
- 2 large ripe tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 teaspoons minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper

■ Cut mushrooms into thick slices. Cut onions in wedges. Cut eggplant, zucchini, red bell pepper and tomatoes into 1-inch pieces.

■ Heat oil over medium heat in large nonstick skillet. Add onions and garlic. Cook and stir until onions are golden, about 4 minutes. Add mushrooms and eggplant and stir until golden, about 4 minutes. Add zucchini, bell pepper, tomatoes, Italian seasoning, salt and pepper. Cover and cook over low heat, stirring occasionally until vegetables are tender, about 10 minutes.

■ Serves 6 to 8

■ If desired, spoon ratatouille into grilled portobello mushrooms or over couscous.

