



Animal Attraction?

The Wild Way I Met My Husband

In last month's newsletter, I told you I would give you more details on the four major dental problems affecting children. I swear I'll keep my promise! But before we dive into that medical jargon, I want to take a quick detour to the wild side.

My husband and I celebrated 22 years of marriage last month, and we met in one of the strangest settings you can imagine — surrounded by animals! I thought this would be the perfect time to tell that story.

It all started when my high school science teacher invited our class to an after-school Earth Day celebration with the Liberty Science Center (LSC). I didn't think I'd be able to make it, but at the last minute, I managed to escape early from my shift at McDonald's and cross the street into Lincoln Park.

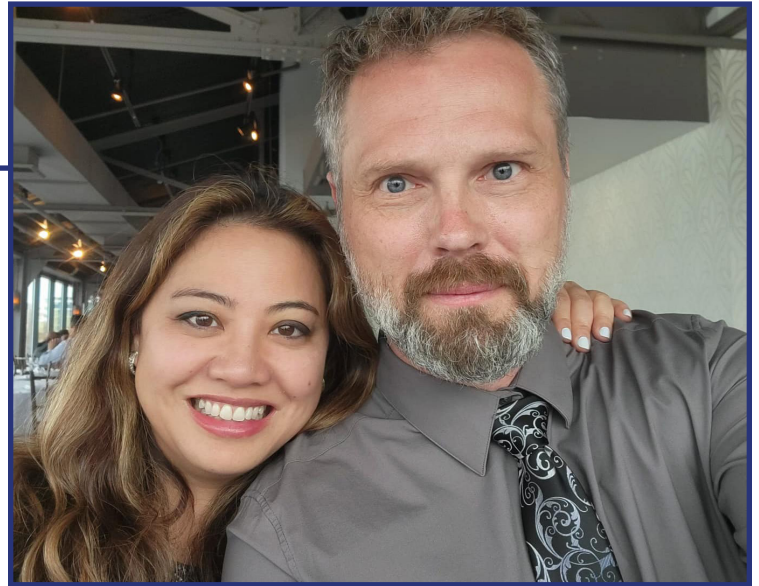
There, the team from LSC taught us how to handle stick insects, cockroaches, and bright green Australian dumpy tree frogs. It was fascinating! The experience hooked me immediately, and when the opportunity to volunteer at LSC came up, I said yes.

I spent the rest of my high school career bouncing from department to department at the science center. I helped with animal husbandry, engineering, special events, and more. When I graduated, LSC offered me a paid position mentoring younger volunteers. Then, in college, I officially joined the staff! That's when the truly wild work started.

In the animal husbandry department, I cared for small mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and insects. I raised crickets, gave vitamins to snakes (yes, it's as complicated as it sounds!), and fed tarantulas, scorpions, and black widows.

Tossing crickets into the tarantula terrariums always made my heart race. The fuzzy spiders like to jump — and they move fast! I felt like James Bond on a mission every time I cracked the terrarium door, threw a handful of crickets inside, and slammed it shut again before a hairy leg poked through. My favorite part of the job was dressing up for fundraising galas. I turned heads when I swanned through the crowd in a fancy dress with my best friend — a live tree frog — perched on my shoulder!

I met my husband, Rich, in the middle of that animal chaos. He worked at LSC too! We spent hours together packing



animals into trucks for off-site exhibits and wading into the ocean with our co-workers to collect fish specimens from the Jersey Shore. When city kids ran up to us on the beach asking questions about our giant seine nets, Rich was always patient, calm, and kind to them. Looking back, I started falling in love with him right then! I could tell he would be a great dad.

Talking to Rich was easy. He's a science geek, just like me, and he knows an amazing amount about the animal world. I loved the way his quiet, shy manner fell away when he told stories, turning him into the life of the party. We were dating almost before we knew it! More than 20 years later, Rich is still the most intelligent person I know — and he's a gourmet cook to boot.

I still can't believe how lucky I am. If I hadn't managed to escape early from my shift at McDonald's, who knows which turns my life would have taken? I'm so glad I ended up with Rich, celebrating our anniversary on a work trip-turned-vacation in Jamaica. (While we were there, I presented at the TMD and Sleep Symposium, explaining how to manage lockjaw in teenagers!)

Even considering the spiders, I wouldn't have it any other way.

To your great smiles and better health,

Dr. Michelle S. Waller

Soreness or Pain?

KNOWING THE DIFFERENCE MATTERS

Exercising improves our bodies and minds, including mental health, sleep quality, and disease prevention. However, the one downside to exercise that deters some people from engaging is soreness the day after a workout.

However, soreness is completely normal! It means your body worked hard to become healthier and stronger. But sometimes, that soreness can be more intense, and the level of discomfort is more severe than a subtle throb. When the discomfort after a workout is unbearable or persists for a few days, this may be a sign of pain from an injury.

Telling the difference between an average level of soreness and something more serious can be difficult, especially if someone is starting their fitness journey for the first time. So, let's set the record straight. Here is how to tell the difference between normal muscle soreness from exercise and pain from a possible injury.

Soreness

When we exercise and push our bodies to become stronger, we're actually making tiny tears in our muscle fibers. This is normal; our muscles become stronger as the body repairs these tears because the fibers become thicker and more powerful. However, this tearing and repairing can make us sore the day after a workout.

To identify soreness, recognize that muscles will feel tender, and you may feel an ache when you try to use the muscle while sitting, standing, or lifting something. Typically, this ache is only present when those muscles move again, not at rest. However, the longer these muscles stay static, the tighter the muscles will get as they repair, which makes moving them again painful. So, the critical characteristic here is that soreness is typically present as you force the muscle to *move*.

Muscle soreness should also only last for 2-3 days and onsets about 24 hours after physical activity occurs.



Pain

Be concerned if the sensation is a more jarring and sharp pain rather than merely soreness with movement. Pain can occur outside the worked muscles, like in the joints or tendons of an affected area. While soreness is a dull ache, pain can feel like a stab with specific movements. Also, pain may be present even when the muscle is *not moving*. If someone is lying down after a workout and feels pain in their knee, even when not in use, that is pain, not just routine soreness.

Pain may last longer than 2-3 days and can happen as you exercise or within 24 hours. Also, while muscle soreness subsides as the muscles move, pain can become more severe when you move the injured area again.

If you believe your discomfort is pain and not muscle soreness, consult with your doctor to help identify the injury and outline the next steps you should take to heal.



What Is Healthspan?

And How Can You Improve It?

If you're retired or about to retire, you have a new and exciting life ahead of you. You may plan to travel the world, start a home project, or adopt a pet. Whatever you decide to do in your retirement, it's essential to ensure you have as much time to enjoy it as possible.

So, how do you make it last?

The best way to ensure you get the most out of your life after retiring is to focus on improving your healthspan. While your lifespan is how long you live, your healthspan is how long you can do things independently with complete physical and cognitive ability. Your healthspan also impacts the quality of life *left* in your lifespan, and the more you invest in it, the more you can enjoy your sunset years to their fullest.

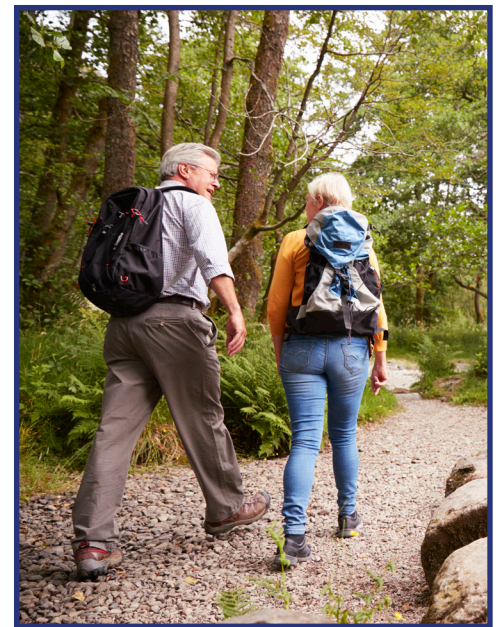
Here's what you can do to invest in your health now to get the highest return in the future.

Invest in all aspects of your fitness.

Exercise is always an excellent investment for a healthier life, but to increase your healthspan, you'll need to invest in all facets of your fitness, not just cardio. To diversify your health investments, focus on strength, power (how much energy you can output in a short time), balance, flexibility, *and* cardio. You can accomplish this through any activity, but ensure that your weekly exercises are well-rounded and include at least one exercise in each category.

How much you invest matters.

We all get busy, that much is true, but how much time you invest in your health makes a difference in how much you get on the return. Ideally, you want to exercise in one of the above categories for 30 minutes daily. If your schedule is slammed, and exercise seems impossible to fit in, try to exercise at a higher intensity (at a level where you cannot hold a conversation



during it) for at least 15 minutes a day for roughly the same results.

Investing in a well-rounded exercise routine with consistent time durations can improve your healthspan for many years. While the amount of time you have left is important, the quality of that time undoubtedly matters too. When you invest in your healthspan, you're investing in your independence!

TAKE A
BREAK!



CLASSIC CABBAGE ROLLS

Inspired by TasteOfHome.com

INGREDIENTS

- 1 medium head cabbage
- 1 1/2 cups chopped onion, divided
- 1 tbsp butter
- 2 14.5-oz cans Italian stewed tomatoes
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tbsp brown sugar
- 1 1/2 tsp salt, divided
- 1 cup cooked rice
- 1/4 cup ketchup
- 2 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1/4 tsp pepper
- 1 lb lean (90%) ground beef
- 1/4 lb Italian sausage

DIRECTIONS

1. In a Dutch oven, cook cabbage in boiling water for 10 minutes; drain. Rinse in cold water; drain. Remove 8 large outer leaves; set aside.
2. In a large saucepan, sauté 1 cup onion in butter. Add tomatoes, garlic, brown sugar, and 1/2 tsp salt. Simmer sauce for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally.
3. In a large bowl, combine rice, ketchup, Worcestershire sauce, pepper, and remaining onion and salt. Crumble beef and sausage over mixture and mix.
4. Remove thick vein from cabbage leaves for easier rolling. Place 1/2 cup meat mixture on each leaf; fold in sides. Starting at an unfolded edge, roll leaf to completely enclose filling. Place rolls seam side down in a skillet. Top with sauce.
5. Cover and cook over medium-low heat for 1 hour. Reduce heat to low; cook 20 minutes longer or until a thermometer inserted reads 160 F.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

1. The Wild Way Dr. Weddle Met Her Husband
2. The Difference Between Muscle Soreness and Pain
3. The Investment You Can't Afford to Skip

Classic Cabbage Rolls
4. A Viral Workout That Actually Works!

A WORKOUT TREND THAT'S HERE TO STAY

THE POWER OF 12-3-30

Workout fads come and go, but the benefit of aerobic exercise has never gone away. Right now, a popular exercise trend called the 12-3-30 Workout is circulating the internet. The thing is, this fad *actually* works, and fitness professionals are giving this exercise the green light.

So what is it, and why is it so good for you?

12-3-30 Explained

The 12-3-30 Workout is pretty simple once you understand what the numbers stand for! Each number in the name correlates to a part of the exercise performed on a treadmill. Twelve percent is the incline you set the treadmill to, 3 mph is the speed at which you walk, and 30 minutes is the amount of time you walk. That's it!

These three numbers create the ideal circumstances in which your body has the resistance to utilize its muscles while also moving fast enough to increase heart rate and reap aerobic benefits. And 30 minutes a day, five days a week, is the ideal exercise to ensure your heart, body, and mind stay healthy.

Benefits of the 12-3-30 Exercise

One reason this workout is gaining so much traction on the internet is because of the benefits. The first benefit users love is that this exercise gives you almost all of the same aerobic perks as running without the high impact on joints (thanks to that 12% incline!).



The second benefit the 12-3-30 Workout offers is endurance. Walking uphill instead of on a flat terrain causes us to activate more muscles, while 30 minutes of exercise forces us to remain at a high-intensity level for longer. This ultimately forces our bodies to acclimate to rigorous movement, which improves our health.

Like any other workout, the 12-3-30 is also great for weight loss, regulating blood sugar, and improving cardiovascular health. But it's also important to remember that no one exercise should be your *only* source of movement. Consider adding the 12-3-30 exercise to your weekly rotation, or use it to follow your weight training or other strength exercises for the best results.