

# Wish You Well

January 2011



**It's 2011! Is this your year to become "fit"?**

"Fitness" is defined as "a state of general mental and physical well-being." Most of us think about exercise when we think of fitness. But fitness encompasses much more than exercise. The idea of fitness or health is not only applied to our physical beings. We are also spiritual beings. Another definition of fitness is "the ability of a population to maintain or increase its numbers in succeeding generations". This idea of fitness could definitely be applied to our spiritual growth and the health of our church! We want 2011 to be the year we focus on being fit – physically, mentally and spiritually!

**Does Cold Weather Really Affect Arthritis?**

Do you have an older relative who claims to know when we're about to experience a temperature change or when a storm is coming, because their hip or knee is "acting up?" I think we all have one! But is there any medical evidence to support such a link? Overall, reports of pain do go up during colder times of year, but researchers say it's a myth that cold weather actually causes arthritis.

While it's been the subject of some studies, there's little evidence that cold weather causes arthritis or affects the intensity of the disease. So how did Grandma Millie or Uncle Ned always seem to know when bad weather would strike? Orthopedic surgeons say the theory is, ahead of a weather front, a temperature change causes a change in barometric pressure, which affects the fluid inside your bones. "It's thought that the fluid inside the knee joints responds to that change in pressure by getting more distended, and that swelling of the joint makes it hurt more. So, it is pretty common to know that a cold front is coming in," states surgeon Hal Cates of Knoxville, TN.

People who complain of joint pain probably have some kind of arthritis. There are many kinds of the disease, but all affect the joints with varying degrees of pain, swelling and stiffness. Dr. Cates says to understand, just think of starting up your car on a really cold day. "Like your car, if you park it outside, when you first move it, you know it doesn't move as well, then you hear some noises, then as it limbers up and warms up, so to speak, those mechanical parts move better, our joints kind of do the same thing." In addition, during severe cold weather, the body may circulate less blood to the hands and feet as a way of conserving warm blood cells near the heart and that can make the joints stiffen.

Also, people often exercise less in the winter, which could make already stiff joints feel worse. Stopping short of heading south for the winter, arthritis sufferers may try medications, creams and salves to alleviate some of their pain. Keep in mind, mental attitude has a lot to do with the perception of pain. Most people get a little depressed during the winter months and during these times; everything has a way of feeling worse, including medical conditions. Exercise may help improve both the mental and physical state. Particularly swimming, it's easy on joints and also can be a relaxing form of exercise.

*Source: Volunteer TV, Knoxville, TN*

**Be a Quitter!**

Interested in making 2011 smoke free? Call the quit line to get support and information. Know that it will take effort to quit smoking. Nicotine is habit forming. Half of the battle in quitting is knowing you need to quit. Take quitting one day at a time, even one minute at a time — whatever you need to succeed. *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."* Phil 4:13



## Symptoms of Hypothermia

Shivering is your body's automatic defense against cold temperature — an attempt to warm itself. Constant shivering is a key sign of hypothermia. Signs and symptoms of hypothermia include: shivering, slurred speech or mumbling, stumbling, confusion or difficulty thinking, poor decision making, drowsiness, progressive loss of consciousness, weak pulse and shallow breathing. A person with hypothermia usually isn't aware of his or her condition, because the symptoms often begin gradually and because the confused thinking associated with hypothermia prevents self-awareness. Hypothermia isn't always the result of exposure to extremely cold outdoor temperatures. An older person may develop mild hypothermia after prolonged exposure to indoor temperatures that would be tolerable to a younger or healthier adult — for example, temperatures in a poorly heated home or in an air-conditioned home. In such cases, mild hypothermia may result in vague symptoms, and the typical shivering may not be present at all. Symptoms of mild hypothermia not related to extreme cold exposure may include: confusion, lack of coordination, dizziness, nausea or vomiting and fatigue.

Call 911 or your local emergency number if you see someone exhibiting signs of hypothermia or if you suspect a person has had unprotected or prolonged exposure to cold weather or water. If possible take the person inside, remove wet clothing and cover him or her in layers of blankets.

*Source: Mayo Clinic*

The Faith Community Nursing program was started in October of 2008 as an outreach of Twin County Regional Healthcare in Galax. The Faith Community Nurse program is just one way TCRH fulfills it's mission to promote, preserve and restore the health of our community.

For more information on Twin County Regional Healthcare or its services, please visit [www.tcrh.org](http://www.tcrh.org)

## Is your New Year's Resolution to lose weight?

Here are some local resources to help you meet your goal.

Weight Watchers has meetings on Monday evenings in Hillsville at First Methodist Church and Saturday mornings in Galax at the Presbyterian Church downtown.



The Wellness Center of TCRH can get you on track with an exercise plan. Call them today at (276) 236-5931.

## Tending the Spirit

### Time for a Change?

How subtracting from your life can actually add to it!

If you are anything like me, you probably feel overwhelmed by all the changes you'd like to see in your life - especially around the New Year, when "change" is the thing to do.

I already know what I *need* to improve – my fitness level, availability to friends, amount of quality time with God. But sometimes, the more I resolve to change, the more I feel as though I've failed when my "to do" list of goals ends up a crumpled piece of paper in a dark corner of my desk – and in my mind.

That's why, this year, I decided to take the opposite approach to make some positive changes in my mental, spiritual, and physical health. No fifty-two-weeks-a-year-or-bust self-improvement plan for me! Instead of adding *more* to my life, I'm seeing what I can *delete* from it for a manageable, unintimidating span of time – a week. And I'm discovering that the benefits I gain from these "fasts" are surprisingly healthful. Give them a try; you'll benefit too.

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