



# A Step Above

*personal training concepts*

FEBRUARY 2013 ISSUE



LAUGH YOUR WAY TO A  
HEALTHY HEART  
THIS VALENTINE'S DAY



Valentine's Day is not only about our special loved ones, it's about the giver as well. We cannot fill the needs of others if our own well has run dry. This Valentine's Day, treat yourself too, **YOU DESERVE IT!** With the growing demands of raising families, working hectic jobs, and financially trying to keep our heads above water, we have a tendency to become weighted down with stress. We have become so absorbed in our own lives and lifestyles that we've learned to ignore the signs of stress. Stress is so commonplace that it has become a way of life. And although a certain amount of stress is okay, too much stress can contribute to a number of health problems. The American Heart Association suggests that laughter is highly therapeutic, infectious, and magical. "It's far more contagious than a cough, snuffle, or sneeze" (*Laughter is the best medicine; The Health Benefits of Humor and Laughter*, 2013, [Helpguide.org](http://Helpguide.org)). Laughter keeps life spirited, vivacious

and exciting. Thus it's imperative we make laughter a part of our daily chores. Laughter is a great way to beat out stress and anxieties. By maintaining a sense of humor and finding time to laugh, our lives are more efficient, more productive, and ultimately more successful.

You may think that heart disease will never affect you, but the American Heart Association ([www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org)) states that heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. Heart disease can be brought on by unhealthy lifestyles and highly stressed careers. It can also be hereditary or based on family medical history, but some of the risk factors can be changed via moving into a healthier lifestyle. Even if you quit smoking, eat healthier, and exercise regularly, you can still develop heart problems if you live a highly stressful lifestyle for prolonged periods of time.

In the article, **HEALING HORIZONS: Love Your Heart This Valentine's Day**, the authors suggest

that "a recent study of patients with heart disease found that relaxation, taming hostility, and helping people change the way they look at life's challenges can reduce their risk of having further heart problems by 75% compared to people given only usual medical care and medications." They went on to state that seeking relaxing self-care treatments (such as massage and facials) are excellent ways to relieve stress.

Think of this Valentine's Day as "**Healthy Heart Awareness Day**." It's not just a time when many people fondly think of those dear to their heart, it's also a time to take care of your own heart ... a perfect time to consider an exercise program. But before beginning any exercise program, it's important to consult your doctor. Checkups and a few special tests (blood pressure, cholesterol and sugar levels) can be one of the greatest gifts you give yourself. Ask your doctor if there are any particular medical problems you

## Laugh ... continued

have that may keep you from beginning a fitness program. Seek the advice of a qualified fitness professional to help you find what your limitations are and set up workouts that will minimize injury. The fitness professional will also be able to give you advice personalized to **your** own fitness capabilities.

The best time of day to work out varies from individual to individual. Some people are naturally early birds; others are night owls. According to a 2009 study in Science Daily, "brain function tends to peak around 9 am in people who prefer mornings and 9 pm in night people. Evening people became physically stronger throughout the day, but the maximum amount of force morning people could produce remained the same." For the person who loves mornings, working out early in the morning takes advantage of the body's natural rhythm. For the night owl whose strength levels increase throughout the day, it's best to train in the evening when strength is strongest. So schedule your workout routines accordingly around the best part of your day. Begin your exercise with things you like to do or that you think you might like if you've never tried them. Start out **LOW** and **SLOW** and work up to where you feel comfortable and are no longer gasping for air.

If you're someone who doesn't like to exercise regularly, don't worry ... there are dozens of other activities you can do to help your heart. Maybe you enjoy learning art, playing music, studying a second language, biking or hiking for enjoyment and relaxation ... these too would be activities that can lead to a healthier heart. We need to be good to

ourselves by scheduling time to relax and laugh out loud to relieve stress. A daily dose of laughter opens up our blood vessels and arteries allowing the blood to flow freely throughout the body, thus preventing a heart attack or cardiac failure. Research has shown that laughter can help diminish pain and protect against the damaging effects of stress, bring greater happiness, boost energy, and even increase immunity. "Humor lightens your burdens, inspires hopes, connects you to others, and keeps you grounded, focused, and alert." (*Laughter is the best medicine; The Health Benefits of Humor and Laughter*, 2013, [Helpguide.org](http://Helpguide.org)).

So this Valentines Day, take a moment to check out from your life and just laugh ... laugh for absolutely no reason at all. Maggie Boleyn, RN and free-lance writer, says, "**Hearty laughter can improve health, boost morale and enhance the quality of life. And who doesn't want to be happier?**"



### *Regular exercise, especially aerobic exercise, has many benefits ... it can:*

- Strengthen your heart & cardiovascular system
- Improve your circulation & help your body use oxygen better
- Improve your heart failure symptoms
- Increase energy levels
- Increase endurance
- Lower blood pressure
- Improve muscle tone & strength
- Improve balance & joint flexibility
- Strengthen bones
- Help reduce body fat & help you reach a healthy weight
- Help reduce stress, tension, anxiety, & depression
- Boost self-image & self-esteem
- Improve sleep
- Make you feel more relaxed & rested
- Make you look fit & feel healthy



### **Pork Tenderloin with Ginger-Peach Sauce**

[www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org)

Fruit on the grill is a wonderful pleasure - the natural sugars caramelize as the juices are seared inside. Combined in a ginger sauce, grilled peaches are a fantastic condiment for pork.

#### **Ingredients**

- 2 medium peaches
- 4 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1-1 1/4 pounds pork tenderloin, trimmed of fat
- 1/4 teaspoon plus 1/8 teaspoon salt, divided
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 1 teaspoon finely chopped fresh ginger
- 1 tablespoon light brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons rice vinegar

#### **Cooking Instructions**

Preheat grill to high. Peel peaches (see Cook Tips). Cut in half and remove the pits. Brush the cut sides with 2 teaspoons oil.

Brush pork with the remaining 2 teaspoons oil; sprinkle with 1/4 teaspoon salt and pepper. Grill the pork, turning occasionally, until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the center registers 160°F, 14 to 18 minutes.

Meanwhile, place the peaches, cut-side down, on the grill rack. Grill, turning occasionally, until tender, 6 to 8 minutes. Transfer the pork and peaches to a cutting board. Let the peaches cool slightly while the pork rests.

Whisk ginger, brown sugar, vinegar and the remaining 1/8 teaspoon salt in a medium bowl. Chop the peaches and add them to the ginger sauce; stir to combine. Slice the pork on the diagonal into 8 pieces. Serve topped with the peach chutney.

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"Health and good humor are to the human body like sunshine to vegetation."

- Massillon