

Weekly wellness with Sonia and Mo

Weekender teams up with Coaches Sonia and Mo who are here to help our readers on their journey to good health, but in a fun and more realistic way!

Find out more about them at
www.thehealthconscience.com



Starting off with a 'basic stretch'



Let's begin with an introduction of who we are. We are coaches Sonia and Mo. What we love doing is helping people get fit. We've been coaching for the last 5 years; before that Sonia worked as cabin crew and Mo was a management consultant. We exercised whenever we could and we ate as healthy as we could. Somehow it just wasn't enough. Our fitness levels always seemed to fall short of what we imagined. As we delved more in to learning about fitness, we realized that there is an overwhelming amount of information and so much of it is contradictory, like –

- Is jogging good for you or is it bad for the knees?
- Are carbs good for you or not?
- Should women lift weights or not?
- Is breakfast important or can we skip it?
- Is olive oil good for cooking or not?

And on and on...

A simple Google search will leave you with over a million confusing results. How do we filter out the facts? As coaches, we spend hours everyday reading research, checking study results and verifying sources. After all, it's our health that we're talking about here. Most of us don't have the time or energy to do so much analysis. It's our mission to help you get the facts right and make healthier choices. Through this column we will share relevant information that will help you understand your body better and develop healthy habits.

The first step to healthy habits is asking your self this.

Can you name one thing in your life that you can do well if your health is bad?

Can you be a good student?

Can you be a good worker?

Can you be a good parent?

Can you be a good leader?

Can you be happy if your health is bad?

It is obvious that we need good health as much as we need air to breathe.

We must prioritize our health, and that is extremely difficult when we have all of our time committed to so many other responsibilities. We can start by making simple changes in the form of healthy habits. It's the little things that we do consistently which build a foundation of wellness.

So the first tip that we will give you is to stand up. If you are reading this while sitting, you need to stand up, lift your arms up and stretch your hands towards the ceiling or the sky, take a deep breath and then sit back down. Go ahead do it now before you read further.

Feels good right! A simple habit of getting out of our chairs every 20 minutes and doing a basic stretch is all that's needed to improve your spine and back health. It improves blood circulation and gives your eyes a much needed break.

Every week we will bring you information on workouts, nutrition, yoga, meditation, posture and lots more. Till then, keep moving!

SINCE YOU ASKED...

Something troubling your mind? Need some professional guidance? Weekender has collaborated with the finest specialists in town, who shall help in answering your doubts and queries, ranging from relationships to anxiety, trauma, career, health and a whole bunch more. Send your question to editor@weekender.bh (Pseudonym can be used) and our expert will get back to you with the best approach to your problem.



Why is 'back to school' so hard?

Dear Anita.

Since the lazy days of Summer vacations are over, I am looking forward to settling into the school routine but i am finding a hard time in adjusting to that as well since my kids are very much used to the routine of sleeping in late and waking even later. Now I have two cranky kids-preschooler and first grader who don't like to be woken up and they remain gloomy mostly through the day. Please help me on how to get them all excited about school and wake them up all happy and excited.

Natasha J.

Dear Natasha,

Coming back to school can be stressful for children and their parents. Waking up early, preparing school bags, lunch boxes, ensuring everyone has nutritious breakfast, right uniform, clean teeth and seatbelts on. That's pretty much a morning routine in each family and as some of us probably know from experience, we tend to master it throughout the whole school year, 'flying' on autopilot in May or June. Each period of holiday puts us in a relaxed mode: we allow ourselves a bit of laziness, sleeping late and longer than normally. No wonder our bodies are in shock when this blissful time ends and we need to face reality.

That's why it's good to make certain preparations ahead of time in order to enter a new school year smoothly. First of all, about one to two weeks before the school year begins, gradually bring the bed time earlier. This way, it will be easier to adjust, especially for children. Also buy uniforms and stationery supplies ahead of time to avoid long queues in the shops. That's less stress for the parents. Do you recall a last year scenario: a store filled with running and screaming kids, you looking for the size or at least trying to locate a shopping assistant who'd reply to you with panic in their voice 'in a moment Madam'? We don't want to experience that again, right?

But if you came late from holidays or somehow left preparations for the last minute, there is still a chance to survive the first week or two. Talk to your kids. I know they are little, but still, I think it's a good idea to ask them how they feel about returning to school, what they are looking forward to, who they missed. Show them support and understanding, perhaps by bringing up a relevant story from your childhood.

Try to direct their attention to positive aspects of the situation (how grown up they are, friends they haven't seen for a few months, after school activities they love etc.). A reward system could work as well. Include yourself in it. Arrange checklists of things to do every morning (for example dressing up quickly, making a bed, brushing teeth -for kids, making good breakfast, reaching school on time for yourself). Be creative! Laminate the lists so you can tick them off daily and wipe when necessary. Don't forget to reward those who achieved their targets.

Create the right atmosphere. Mornings are usually stressful for everyone but it doesn't have to be like that. Prepare as much as you can the evening before: uniforms, bags, products for breakfast and lunch boxes. Know what you'd be doing and avoid being in rush. Set some energising music in the kitchen and smile! Even if you don't feel like, your brain will record it as happiness. Surely your kids will smile back to you or at least at you when they find you singing along and dancing while making sandwiches in the morning. It's all about attitude!

Last but not least, consider organising a small party after completion of the first week to catch up with your friends. Kids could also invite some of theirs and enjoy playing together in a relaxed environment. Surviving first weeks of school surely deserves a celebration!



Anita Makowska - Al Nabbool is a Psychologist and a Nutrition Psychology Specialist. Her services range from general psychology, through nutrition psychology, consultations for expatriates (difficulties with adaptation in a new country) and organisation psychology (recruitment and career planning). For appointment, call 36722123.