

MOVE TO BE STRONG!



VON SMART NEWSLETTER



FEBRUARY 2023

February is the shortest month of the year. Yet it seems to drag on the longest. Days are still short, snow is still falling, warm weather is still months away. However, it can be the most demotivating month in terms of health and fitness goals. Here are 5 tips to help you brave the month of February:

1. **Buddy system:** there is nothing like overcoming the harder tasks than doing it with someone. Using the buddy system to hold yourself accountable can keep you on the right track.
2. **Try something new:** sticking with the same old routine can get old. Take the next 4 weeks to try something different and renew your sense of motivation. Maybe it is a dance class, perhaps it's home workouts or a new recipe a week.
3. **Revisiting goals:** with January behind us, take the time to reflect on the goals you may have set at the beginning of the year. Perhaps, it is time to re-evaluate them, break them down in to smaller more achievable steps.
4. **Make light a priority:** one of the biggest triggers for seasonal affective disorder or depression is the lack of sunshine. Whether it is taking some time to sit by the window in the sun or going for a walk.
5. **Schedule time for what you love:** as much as we want to change out habits, it is important that we take time to continue to do the things we love. Read, walk, socialize, be active.

The VON SMART Program

Helping to keep our community dwelling older adults active, engaged and free from falls!

For more information about SMART exercise classes and fall prevention workshops please contact:

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With **Heart Month** in mind take a moment to review the signs of a heart attack and the infographic below.

Signs can vary and may be different for men and women. If you experience any of these signs, call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number immediately



Chest Discomfort



Sweating



Upper Body Discomfort



Nausea



Shortness of Breath



Light-headedness

[Signs of a heart attack | Heart and Stroke Foundation](#)

[heart-failure-infographic-eng \(ottawaheart.ca\)](#)

**UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA
HEART INSTITUTE
INSTITUT DE CARDIOLOGIE
DE L'UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA**

CANADA'S SILENT EPIDEMIC

the impact of heart failure

50% of patients diagnosed with heart failure will die within 5 years

40 million people are affected by heart failure around the world

600,000 people are affected by heart failure in Canada today

10 billion spent annually on hospital costs associated with heart failure

No. 1 driver for unplanned hospital admission

Annual deaths from heart failure in Canada exceed the combined total of BREAST + COLON + PROSTATE CANCER

Learn the symptoms of heart failure | www.ottawaheart.ca/heartfailure

Did You Know?

February is heart health month, but did you know that your heart health can have an effect on your risk of falls?

For those with cardiovascular disease, the risk for falls is even higher, with 60% at moderate or high risk for falls. Take a moment to review the information below to help you reduce your risk:

- **Removing the stigma:** Many older adults who fall may be hesitant to mention the fall to their health care provider or others in their life due to feelings of embarrassment or shame. Though an individual may not have been injured in a fall, this can result in fear of experiencing a subsequent fall. With this increased fear of falling we may see a decrease in physical activity and engagement in physical activity. This can lead to deconditioning and decreased quality of life. Despite the increased frequency in falls among people with cardiovascular disease, the topic is often overshadowed by others medical issues.
- **Educating yourself on your medication:** Certain medications can increase your risk for falls. Knowing what medications you are taking and the side effects or interactions they may have is important. If you have any concerns speak with a health care professional to weigh the increased risks of falling with the benefits of your medication.
- **Knowing your risk:** Cardiovascular conditions like syncope (fainting) increases with age and can result in falls. Individuals experiencing heart failure and arrhythmia have an especially higher risk for falls. If you are concerned about your heart health speak with your health care provider.



Monthly Feature: VON SMART Instructor



Susan McNamara

Susan McNamara is a graduate from the Social Service Worker - Gerontology Program from St. Clair College, and has been registered with OCSWSSW as a Social Service Worker since 2013. This education is coupled with her years of experience within the healthcare field, where she was employed from 2007 until 2013. While she was enrolled in school, her placement was at the Half Century Club for seniors in Leamington. At her placement, there was an exercise program in place where members would come and participate. This is where Susan developed a passion to continue on this path of exercise for older adults.

Susan has been with the SMART Program since its inception in 2013. She continues to facilitate classes throughout Windsor and Essex County. Susan enjoyed creating virtual exercise videos during COVID when in-person classes were closed down. She continues to improve her creativity to keep the exercise classes practical and fun.

The following are courses Susan has taken over the years: Restorative Care Education and Training course with the Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging (CCAA) and DROM (drumming and fitness). She believes in the motto, "Keeping strong to live a better life".

Resources McMaster Optimal Aging Portal

February is Heart Month: 4 ways to reduce your risk of heart disease

(mcmasteroptimalaging.org)

February is Heart Month in Canada, a time to bring awareness to cardiovascular health, what it encompasses, and how the adoption of healthy lifestyle behaviours can reduce our risk of developing heart-related diseases. Heart disease affects over 2.5 million Canadians each year and is the second-leading cause of death in Canada. Luckily, healthy lifestyle choices – like diet modifications and exercise – are a good way to combat heart disease. Other strategies that involve medication reviews and lowering salt-intake can also help lower your risk.

Modify your diet to reduce cholesterol

The Portfolio diet is a plant-based diet that consists of four cholesterol-lowering foods: nuts, plant-based proteins, soluble fibre, and plant sterols. In combination with a National Cholesterol Education Program Step II diet, the Portfolio diet can reduce “bad cholesterol” and other types of fat found in the blood, inflammation, blood pressure, and the ten-year risk of coronary heart disease.

Make exercise part of your daily routine

Living an active lifestyle can decrease your risk of developing chronic conditions such as heart disease. There are many effective forms of exercise that vary in intensity: from walking, aquatic exercise and yoga to high intensity interval training and strength training. Whatever your preference may be, consider incorporating some form of fitness into your everyday routine to benefit your long-term health and well-being.

Be aware of hidden heart risks in your medicine cabinet

Millions of people have nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as Advil, Aleve, Anaprox, Celebrex, Motrin and Voltaren sitting in their bathroom cabinet, and many people will pop one or two casually at the slightest pain. However, NSAIDs can increase the risk of heart attack, with the level of risk tied to the type of NSAID, how much is taken, and for how long. This doesn't mean you should stop taking them altogether, but understanding their risk is important when assessing whether they are needed.

Lower your salt intake

Salt is a major source of dietary sodium and consuming too much sodium increases the risk of stroke, heart disease, and in particular, high blood pressure. Affecting more than 4.5 million Canadians, high blood pressure is known as ‘the silent killer’ because it often develops without symptoms. When left uncontrolled, it can lead to heart attacks, heart failure, aneurysms, and metabolic syndrome. Sodium reduction is now recognized as an important way to prevent major chronic diseases.

There are many things you can do to contribute to better overall heart health. Start small, by making subtle changes to your diet, and incorporating some form of physical activity – whether it be a walk or Yoga class at home – into your regular routine. Being mindful of the medications you take, and your salt intake can also help.

VON Updates

**As a reminder there will be no classes on
Monday February 20th, 2023**



VON SMART Exercise & Fall Prevention

Windsor-Essex | Chatham-Kent | Sarnia-Lambton

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