

MOVE TO BE STRONG!



VON SMART NEWSLETTER



FEBRUARY 2025

Happy Heart Health Month!

One month has passed since we turned the pages on our calendar and welcomed in the New Year. We hope that you took the time to reflect on 2024 and set meaningful, purposeful goals for yourself in 2025. As you work towards achieving your goals for 2025, we encourage you to approach this new year with an open, positive attitude and acknowledge the potential that this year holds.

Goals related to improving overall health are often a great place to start as you strive for a healthier lifestyle. In Canada, February is Heart Month which brings an opportunity to focus on your cardiovascular health and learn prevention strategies to lower your risk of cardiovascular disease. It is suggested that Heart Disease will impact almost all of us in one way or another in our lifetime; whether it be directly, or indirectly through a friend or family member. Raising awareness and learning about cardiovascular health, helps us to incorporate healthy behaviour changes into our goals for 2025. We can achieve this by increasing our level of physical activity, eating healthy foods, getting proper sleep and managing stress. These positive behaviour changes can help reduce your risk of developing cardiovascular disease.

Source: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/news/2024/02/message-from-the-minister-of-health-and-minister-of-sport-and-physical-activity--heart-month-february-2024.html>

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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FEBRUARY IS HEART MONTH: 4 WAYS YOU CAN IMPROVE YOUR HEART HEALTH

McMaster University – February 7, 2024



February is Heart Month, a dedicated time to raise awareness about cardiovascular health and encourage individuals to adopt heart-healthy habits. The aging process can change the cardiovascular system, making older adults more susceptible to heart-related issues. For older adults, taking proactive steps to care for their hearts becomes even more crucial. Let's explore some key aspects of cardiovascular health and ways you can embrace a heart-healthy lifestyle.

Regular physical activity is a cornerstone of heart health.

And there is always time to start moving! Many effective forms of exercise vary in intensity, from walking to high-intensity interval training. In older adults who were previously inactive, walking can reduce some risk factors for heart disease – including body fat, blood pressure, body mass index, and body weight. High-intensity interval training (known as HIIT) can also decrease risk factors for heart disease in adults who are overweight or living with obesity and is most effective when performed at least three times weekly for more than 12 weeks. Whatever your preference, consider incorporating some exercise into your everyday routine to benefit your long-term health and well-being.

A heart-healthy diet is an essential component of cardiovascular well-being.

A few tips to help get you on a heart-healthy diet include controlling your portion sizes, incorporating more vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and low-fat protein sources into your diet, reducing unhealthy fats and salt, and planning by creating daily menus. Canada's Food Guide is a great resource for healthy eating tips and recipes.

Regular health check-ups are crucial for identifying and managing any potential cardiovascular issues.

Older adults should schedule routine visits with their healthcare providers to monitor blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and overall heart health. Early detection and intervention may help manage cardiovascular conditions effectively. Your healthcare team can also help to identify which exercise and dietary strategies are best for you and how to safely engage in them.

Practice stress-reducing techniques.

Chronic stress can take a toll on the heart. Practicing stress-reducing techniques such as meditation, deep breathing exercises, and engaging in hobbies you enjoy can contribute to better cardiovascular health. Building a strong support system and staying socially connected also play a role in managing stress and promoting overall well-being.

Heart Month is a poignant reminder for older adults to prioritize their cardiovascular health. By adopting a heart-healthy lifestyle that includes regular physical activity, mindful nutrition, regular check-ups, and stress management, older adults can take charge of their well-being and enjoy a heart-healthy life.

Source: <https://www.mcmasteroptimalaging.org/blog/detail/hitting-the-headlines/2024/02/07/february-is-heart-month-4-ways-you-can-improve-your-heart-health?sid=59a68dbd-efa7-4239-95bb-2115ad30d597&hl=Exercise+and+your+heart>

DID YOU KNOW?

February is Recreation Therapy Month!

Recreation Therapists can be found in a variety of settings, including retirement homes, hospitals, long-term care homes, day programs, mental health centres, and THE SMART PROGRAM! Recreation Therapy focuses on optimizing the quality of life for an individual by helping them fully participate in recreation and leisure activities that are meaningful to them.

Role of a Recreation Therapist

Recreation Therapists focus on five domains of wellness:

1. Physical Domain

Utilizes activities that improve or maintain physical health, mobility and overall fitness. Examples include: group walks, chair yoga and SMART exercise classes!

2. Cognitive Domain

Enhance memory, attention, problem-solving, and decision-making skills through recreational activities. Examples include: memory games, crosswords, Sudoku puzzles, dual-tasking exercises, etc.

3. Social Domain

Focuses on developing healthy relationships, improving communication skills, and providing opportunities for social and community engagement. Examples include: participating in any type of group or social club such as a book club, gardening club, or a SMART exercise class!

4. Spiritual Domain

Strives to create a sense of meaning, purpose, and connection by participating in any type of activity that encourages reflection, mindfulness, gratitude, etc. Examples include: guided meditation, faith-based practices, deep breathing, etc.

5. Emotional Domain

Focuses on understanding, managing, and expressing emotions in healthy ways. Examples include: art therapy and journaling.

Recreation Therapy and the SMART Program

The SMART program implements aspects of each recreation therapy domain during SMART exercise class, to enhance all aspects of wellness for older adults.

Physical activity improves strength, balance and mobility, while the group exercise style enhances social connections. Cognitive skills are sharpened through learning routines, following verbal and visual instructions, as well as practicing dual-task exercises. Emotional and spiritual well-being is supported through mindfulness training during exercise classes and the benefits of exercise as it relates to mood enhancement and stress relief. The SMART program uses recreation therapy practices to provide a holistic approach to enhancing the well-being of older adults across Erie St. Clair.

Source: <https://www.completetherapies.com/5-domains-of-recreation-therapy/>

HAPPY RETIREMENT TO OUR WONDERFUL SMART INSTRUCTOR BOB!



Photo Credit: Active Lifestyle Centre, Chatham

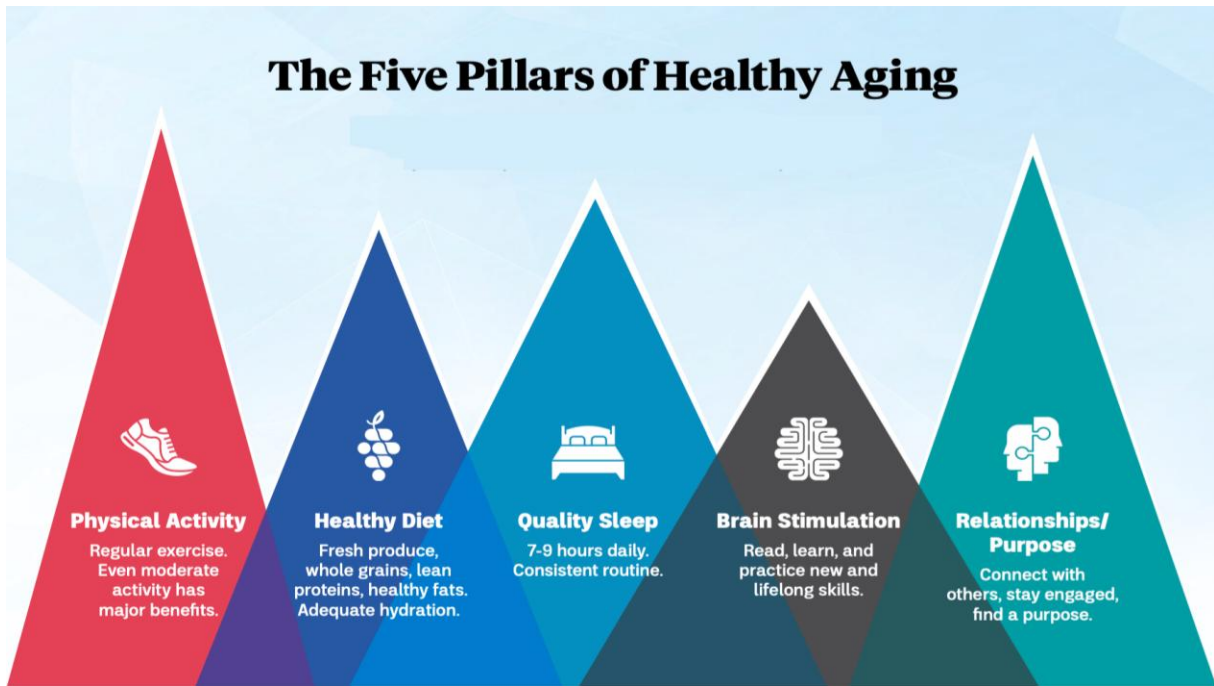
Happy Retirement!

It is with mixed emotions that we announce the retirement of our beloved SMART fitness instructor Bob B.

Bob has instructed fitness classes for over 30 years and has been an integral part of the SMART program since 2019. He has facilitated classes in various retirement homes and community locations in Chatham and surrounding area.

On behalf of the SMART team and your class participants we would like to acknowledge your many incredible contributions to our team over the years. Your friendly personality, expertise, leadership, laughter, and overall professionalism will be missed by all who had the pleasure of working with you. Your presence will certainly be missed but we wish you nothing but the best as you enjoy your next adventures in retirement – we can't wait to see pictures!

THANK YOU, BOB!



EXPLORING THE FIVE PILLARS OF HEALTHY AGING

Discover the keys to aging well so you can enjoy your best life longer

Yes, it's true: getting older brings significant life change that can make it harder to stay active, nimble and mentally strong. The good news is that adopting a few healthy habits can soften some of the edges. Learning and living these pillars of healthy aging is a great way to navigate the changes that come with time.

Aging Redefined

Life expectancy for adults has changed dramatically over the last century. Advancements in modern medicine along with improved living standards have extended our lives—and our quality of life. Today, practicing a healthy lifestyle can greatly reduce your risk of disease as well as help with what is called “successful aging”. This refers to having the cognitive and physical capacity to actively engage with your life—and be happy.

“Establish good habits early and maintain them. While what your body is capable of changes over time, you can still do a lot of things to stay fit and active as you age.” - Edward Wiese, MD, Aspen Valley Primary Care and the medical director for Whitcomb Terrace.

The Five Pillars of Healthy Aging

Many factors influence how we age. While some, like genetics, are out of our control, others are within it. Dr. Wiese emphasizes the importance of preventive care, including seeing your doctor and keeping up with your vaccines, as well as establishing and maintaining good habits based on the five pillars of healthy aging.

Source: <https://www.aspenhospital.org/healthy-journey/living-well-at-altitude-the-five-pillars-of-healthy-aging/>

**Will the groundhog see his shadow
on Sunday, February 2nd?**



**Happy Valentine's Day
from your fitness friends
in the SMART Program!**

