

# HEALTHY LIVING

## Caffeine craze sweeps college campuses

by Sarah Orr  
health page editor

Coffee, Mountain Dew, Vivarin, and chocolate all have something in common. They contain the active ingredient caffeine and they are used daily by college students everywhere to stay awake during class, to pull all nighters, and to have enough energy to get through the day.

Caffeine is a chemical stimulant that primarily affects the central nervous system, cardiac muscle, and the respiratory system in humans, and has a very bitter taste. Caffeine has also been shown to affect metabolism. It increases the level of fatty acids circulating within your system. Some studies have shown that this

aids in enhancing fat oxidation, but there are serious questions raised if caffeine actually has any affect when dieting.

Caffeine may seem like a harmless drug, but it could and has had many serious health implications. One problem associated with caffeine is over-dosing. If you happen to overdo your caffeine intake, you may experience some of the following side effects: restlessness, nervousness, excitement, insomnia, flushed face, diuresis, gastrointestinal disturbance, muscle twitching, rambling flow of thought or speech, cardiac arrhythmia.

Another problem with caffeine is addiction. This is a hidden danger because it may occur without the victim

becoming aware before it is too late.

Regular caffeine consumption will naturally decrease sensitivity to it. When consumption is reduced, the body becomes particularly sensitive to adenosine. When this happens, blood pressure drops sharply leading to an excess of blood accumulated in the head, which causes a headache. This is just one of the symptoms of withdrawal.

Some other symptoms may include, but are not limited to irritability, nervousness, headaches, fatigue, nausea, lack of concentration, and vomiting.

There are ways to break the cycle, however. Some people are able to quit "cold turkey," however this procedure isn't the most effective route for the majority. Most people addicted to caffeine

must wean themselves off gradually. Caffeine fading may prove successful. The best way to begin this treatment is to keep track of your caffeine intake for a week, recording any all foods, drinks, or pills ingested that may contain the chemical. Keep a meticulous log. At the end of the week evaluate your results. See where you are unexpectedly consuming caffeine and other places that you may eliminate it. Make a conscious effort to adjust your habits to reduce intake. Lots of sleep and exercise can counter the uncomfortable effects of withdrawal.

Although these drawbacks to caffeine seem somewhat mild or harmless, overdoses have led to death. Toxic levels of caffeine have been documented of one

individual ingesting 24 grams. The lethal dosage that is reported to be fatal in 50 percent of the population is 10 grams administered orally. As with all drugs, this typically depends on the size and weight of the person and will vary among individuals.

You shouldn't take any unnecessary risks, however. Be conscious at all times what goes into your body. Whether studying for that molecular biology exam, finishing a 20-page English paper, or working on a senior design project with your group, plan ahead to get the work done early and lay off the caffeine.

## Yoga becomes fitness phenomenon

by Sarah Orr  
health page editor

Yoga has become one of the hottest fitness activities in the country. Many enjoy the relaxing, body-shaping exercise phenomenon. Even Penn State Behrend offers a yoga class, and a yoga club has formed in recent months for several interested students looking for a way to participate in the craze. You may be wondering what exactly yoga is or what healthy benefits it may have to offer. I hope this article will shed a little light on the mystery.

The yoga practiced by a majority of health nuts today has its principles deeply rooted in religious beliefs of the Hindu faith dating back some 5,000 years. The term yoga was derived from the word meaning "union" in Sanskrit because it pertains to more than just an exercise routine. The certain form of yoga that we practice today was referred to as *hatha yoga*. It was intended to prepare a participant's body to pursue the union with the divine while heightening the awareness of a "higher" spiritual state.

There are three fundamental aspects of yoga used in exercise. They include breathing, meditation, and postures.

Breathing is central to the beliefs established about the life force called "prana" in ancient times. It was said that shallow, rapid breaths impeded the life force, prana, from entering the person's body properly and af-

fecting the mind and body negatively. Long, deep breaths let the life force flow freely and are highly encouraged.

Meditation is the second aspect of yoga that provides the participant with a calmed mind. Many find the benefits of this aspect of yoga to include a release of stress and an increase in energy. Meditation reinforces the principles of yoga and helps focus the breathing of an individual. This promotes a sense of well being and balance.

The third aspect of yoga is the variety of postures it teaches. Another word for the postures is asanas. One of the popular positions in yoga is the Dog and Cat. It increases flexibility, particularly in the spine. It is a combination of two poses flowing into one another. One begins this activity on your hands and knees. Keep hands slightly in front of your shoulders with your legs approximately hip width apart. Inhale as you tilt your tailbone and pelvis up, let your spine curve downward, while dropping the stomach low as you lift your head up. Gently stretch. Exhale and move into the cat position by reversing the bend of the spine while tilting the pelvis. Draw the spine upward and pull the chest and stomach in. Repeat this several times, flowing from the cat into the dog, and vice versa.

If you are intrigued and would like to begin taking yoga for yourself, the yoga club meets twice a week on Monday and Wednesday at 9 p.m. in the Junker Center.



PHOTO BY KRISTIN RODGERS

Student Chayanant Hongfa enjoys working out daily in the Jageman Fitness Room with the new equipment.

## It's a weighty issue: tips and techniques

by Ryan Anthony  
staff writer

Winter weather is on the way, and for most people that means it's getting a bit too cold outside to go for a run. It's time to start up a winter season workout routine. If your new exercise includes heading over to the Junker Center and hitting the weight room, then you have some things to consider before you begin.

Get ready to sleep a lot because lifting weights will wear you out a lot more than aerobic exercise. You will be tired when you are done with your workout, but unlike aerobic exercise, you will still feel the effects the next day and, hopefully, the day after that too.

This is one of the most important things to know about weight lifting: Pain is good. You might as well teach yourself to enjoy the pain, because it is a necessary part of lifting weights. One lifter in the Junker Center weight room said, "If you don't like the soreness, then you might as well not work

out."

After working out a muscle group, your muscles should be sore for at least the next couple days. This is what weight lifters call delayed onset muscle soreness, or DOMS. It basically means that if your muscles are not sore the next couple days after a workout, then your workout did not do any good. Soreness means that the muscle is rebuilding itself and this rebuilding is what makes your muscles bigger.

It takes calories to rebuild a muscle, so in the long run, weight lifting burns more calories than aerobic exercise. It helps you lose weight, too, because your body's metabolism will begin to stay higher than normal.

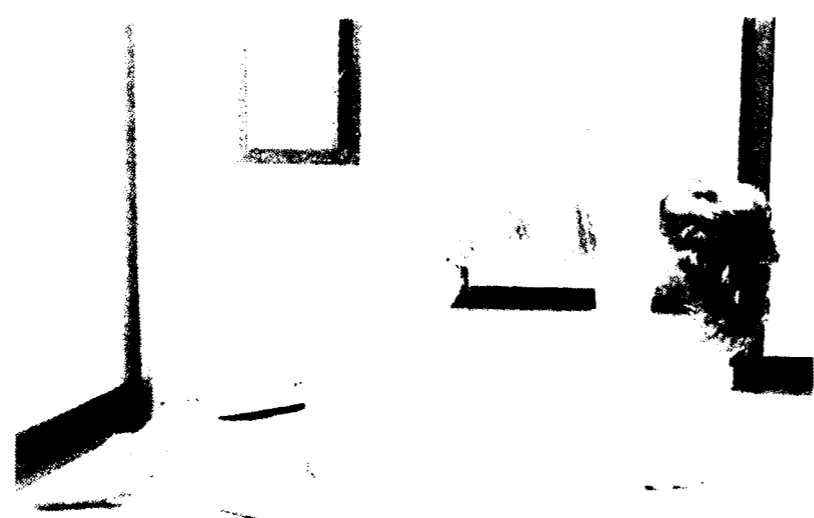
When you are ready to begin working out with weights, be sure to warm up your muscles, first. Do a few minutes of cardio or a couple sets with light weights. Stretch both the muscles you plan to work out as well as complementary muscle groups. For example, if you are going to work out your back, stretch your back, and

also your shoulders, chest, and abs too.

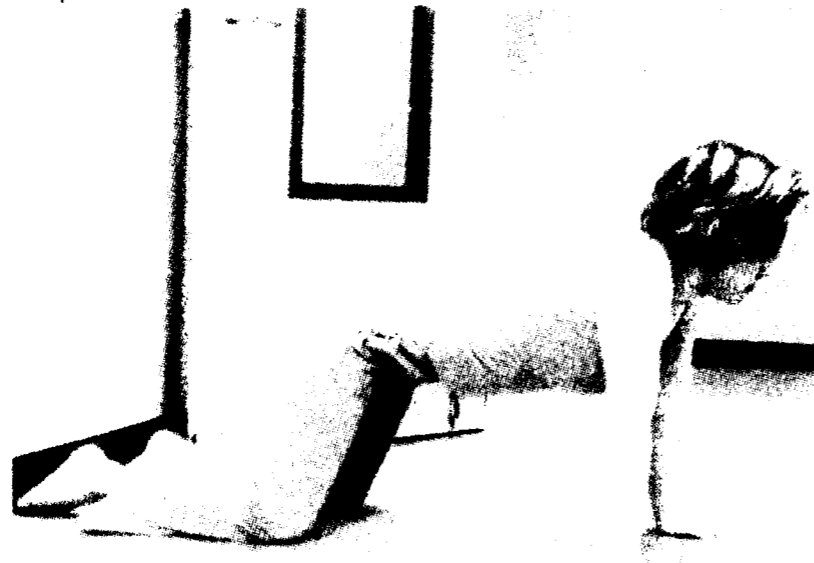
When you first pick up a dumbbell or climb into a machine, start with a light weight. Do not try to start with more than you can handle. Increase weight as you become comfortable with the exercise. You should work with a weight that is heavy enough that you cannot do more than eight to ten repetitions. Doing the exercise until your muscles cannot handle any more repetitions is called going to failure and you should do this with each set. This means that if you are doing it right, you should slightly decrease the weight with each set.

Be sure to give muscle groups a few days to rest before you exercise the same ones again. Also, keep in mind that you have legs too. Too many people focus only on their chests and arms and never even think about working out their legs.

Do not let the snow get in your way of your exercise. There are still a few weeks left for you to get up to 100 miles.



The Dog and Cat are two yoga postures that go hand in hand and add flexibility to the spine. They involve arching your back and reversing the position.



PHOTOS BY ROB WYNNE

## 100 Mile Mania Update

Allison Jawdy



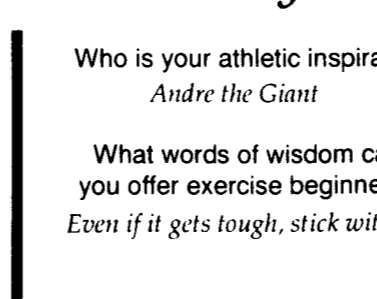
Who is your athletic inspiration?  
Brandi Chastain

Miles:

What words of wisdom can you offer exercise beginners?  
Do your best, and don't give up.

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Ryan Brewer



Who is your athletic inspiration?  
Andre the Giant

Miles:

What words of wisdom can you offer exercise beginners?  
Even if it gets tough, stick with it.

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Sundeep Bhatia

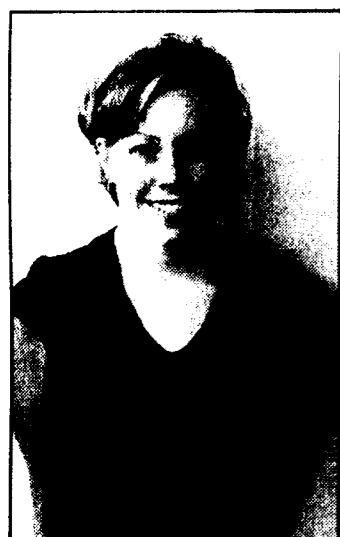


Who is your athletic inspiration?  
Andre Agassi

Miles:

What words of wisdom can you offer exercise beginners?  
Just do it!

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