

WELLBEING NEWSLETTER FROM
GYM MANAGER JON HOPE

Hello,

I hope you are all staying safe and keeping well!

During these unprecedented times, I would like to offer my support with valid information, keeping you well informed with nutrition and exercise advice.

For those who are unaware, I am the Gym Manager at Stourbridge Lawn Tennis & Squash Club and a holistic health practitioner for the past 17 years.

The Coronavirus is the Pandemic of the century, the last being the Spanish flu in 1918, which cost the lives of 50 million worldwide. This new virus COVID-19 is airborne and highly contagious, therefore is spreading rapidly at an alarming rate. So how can we maximize our resistance to this virus?

First and foremost, we need to understand that the immune system is our defense against viruses and diseases. There are different ways we can boost the immune system, but there are also many that can reduce it. Let's have a look at what reduces it first!

- Stress – short term stress affects the gut; long term stress affects the immune system. This is due to elevated amounts of cortisol in the body
- Bad diet – processed foods and sugars have a lack of nutrient density so does not sufficiently aid bodily functions, such as cell regeneration, organ function and metabolism. This significantly lowers the immune system
- Poor sleep – lack of adequate rest affects us both mentally and physically, while limiting the bodies regeneration processes. Over a length of time this will affect the immune system
- Poor hydration – either lack of clean quality fluids or too much inadequate fluids dehydrates the body, and therefore can't remove the metabolic wastes, which in turn lowers the immune system over long periods of time

- Erratic breathing – stress causes a breathing rate increase and shallow breathing resulting in poor oxygen consumption. This creates anxiety, again producing excess cortisol
- Over exercising – whilst exercising is good for you, it can also be bad for you! Excess exercise can suppress the immune system

So, as you can see if we are not looking after ourselves as a whole, we can create our own demise by lowering our immunities.

I follow 6 foundational principles, which addresses the above points. Let's look at these in a little more depth!

1. Sleep – We need 8 hours sleep every night to help repair the body. On average a person gets between 5-7.5 hours of deep sleep, and the average university student gets 4.7 hours per night. If an individual only gets 6 hours per night, then that is 2 hours per night in deficit and over a week 14 hours! If you were to mention to an individual, they had to live their life without 2 nights of sleep per week they would laugh or be shocked at the prospect. While some people say they can manage, I would seriously try 8 hours a night and see if this makes a difference to your mental, physical and emotional well-being first. Sleep is humans cheapest, chief effective medicine, period. If we don't get enough sleep this affects the hormonal system, disrupting melatonin, which is key to producing white blood cells that fight off infection. So, if you want to seriously fend off COVID-19 I would get a good night's sleep!
2. Nutrition – You need to eat good quality food. The saying 'you are what you eat' is very true. What we consume regenerates the whole body down to cellular level, so what passes our lips is very important. If we eat processed foods, then the lack of nutrient density in these foods have minimal healing powers to support bodily functions. This puts stress on mental function, organ function, blood sugar handling, physical function etc. During these times a person usually reaches for sugary foods for comfort, but half a teaspoon of processed sugar suppresses the immunity by half for up to 4 hours. So, eat a wholefood diet and preferably organic where you can, as these will pack more nutrients than conventional foods to really boost your immunities.

3. Hydration – We need to drink half of our body weight in ounces per day. You can work this out by finding your weight in kg and then times it by 0.033, and that is how much water you require in litres. It needs to be clean, quality water. So, cups of tea and coffee do not count. The fluid has to be clear and be of a good PH level (ph of 7 or close to it is ideal) to reach the cells straight away (no vodka and gin do not count). If the fluid is colored then it has to go through the digestive system first and these are mostly diuretics, so delayed and probably sugared. Remember the best solution for pollution is dilution! Water is nature's best solvent, so flush out the toxicity!
4. Thinking – It is dangerous to wind yourself up with negative thoughts. This can lead to stressful situations sparking the fight or flight response, firing up cortisol levels (remember what I said earlier, about prolonged elevated cortisol levels from stress) affecting the immune system. Think of the placebo and nocebo effect. If you BELIEVE you are unwell (nocebo), and that you have a disease it will probably manifest itself in your mind, opening yourself up to a virus or disease. If you BELIEVE you are happy, healthy and whole (placebo) then you will probably get the same kind of return! Remember, 'Don't sweat the small stuff'! If he leaves his pants on the floor or she doesn't put your things back where you left it then let it pass!
5. Breathing – We breathe about 25,900 times per day! If we are anxious about something then your breathing rate will elevate, and in turn raise your heart rate, leading to anxiety. This creates another stress response which raises cortisol levels. With this we only get half of our breath as we inhale. You need to take deeper breathes to get the diaphragm working properly, as the more oxygen allowed into the system ignites the metabolism, promoting a boost in energy. This boost in energy and oxygen helps to elevate the immune system. Try lying or sitting down. Breathe in through the nose, allowing your belly to swell for the first two thirds of your breath, and then the last third into your chest. Breathe out through 'pursed lips'. Try doing this 12 times over the next 24 hours using the 8 seconds to breathe in, hold for 6 seconds, then breathe out for 4 seconds and see if this helps promote energy and calm the mind.
6. Movement – Your body is a system of systems that oscillate, or in another term is a pumping mechanism. We need to move to help shift fluids and toxins around the body, so it can detoxify and eliminate waste. Getting the right

balance is key. Firstly though, the best exercise in the world for you is the one your willing to do! So, if you feel vitality before you exercise then go for it and exercise well! However, if you feel low, tired or lethargic then you should only train light. Try yoga, meditation or we have some great 'zone exercises' if you don't feel up to it, but exercise.

7. Walking is man's best medicine for activity! Remember, if you cannot improve on your workout by 1-3% in your session then it should be light! Although exercise is good for the body it can also suppress the immune system if we train to hard, as it is 'catabolic' in nature (breaks the body down) and so raises cortisol levels. With this in mind, your best time to train is in the morning. When we wake up in the morning cortisol is at its peak (cortisol is also good for you!), and in the afternoon about 3pm melatonin kicks in preparing us for a deep sleep. So, don't trash your ability to sleep by doing a hard workout late at night. Remember work hard, rest hard!

I hope this newsletter helps you with the understanding of how the body regenerates itself for a healthy you.

Next time, we will send out a newsletter on how to support your immune system with nutrition and supplements, to help the immune system fight against any virus or disease.

Thank you for your time.

Here's to living longer, living better!

Jon