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SURPRISING REASONS YOU'RE GAINING WEIGHT

If you started taking in more calories than usual or cutting back on exercise, you wouldn't be surprised if the numbers on the scale crept higher. But what if you're doing everything the same as you always do and your weight still goes up? It's time to delve a little deeper into what else might be going on.

Lack of Sleep There are two issues at work with sleep and weight gain. The first is intuitive: If you're up late, the odds are greater that you're doing some late-night snacking, which will increase your calorie intake. The other reason involves what's going on biochemically when you're sleep deprived. Changes in hormone levels increase hunger and appetite and also make you feel not as full after eating.

Stress When life's demands get too intense, our bodies go into survival mode: Cortisol, the "stress hormone," is secreted, which causes an increase in appetite. And then of course, we may reach for high-calorie comfort foods in times of stress as well. This combination is a perfect breeding ground for weight gain.

Antidepressants An unfortunate side effect from some antidepressants is weight gain. Talk to your doctor about making changes to your treatment plan if you think your antidepressant is causing weight gain. But never stop or change your medication on your own. Realize that some people experience weight gain after beginning drug treatment simply because they're feeling better, which leads to a better appetite. Also, depression itself can cause changes in weight.

Source: Medical News Today

PEOPLE WHO LIVE TO BE 100

"I've studied them, and they have one thing in common. None of them wears a watch."

Source: Dr. Argir Kirkov Hadzhichristov

WEIGHT GAIN NO MYSTERY

It is estimated that 55 percent of adults in America are overweight, as compared to only 25 percent in 1970. How can that be? The answer is simple. Last year we took in 15 percent more calories last year than we did in 1974.

Source: Tufts University Health & Nutrition Letter

OLD SHOES

Take a look at your old jogging/walking/running shoes before you buy a new pair. Place the shoes on a table and look at them from behind.

If the shoes noticeably lean inward they need to be replaced with new shoes (or have an insert) designed to control inward movement of the foot.

If the shoe leans outward, it should be replaced with one that has more cushioning.

When you do replace your shoes, get a professional to advise you. For example, if you have high arch, you need maximum cushioning, with a soft mid sole. If you have flat feet, you need good motion control and a firm insole.

Source: Georgia Tech Sports Medicine & Performance Newsletter

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ARE YOU 'ALMOST ALCOHOLIC'?

Lots of people like to kick back every once in a while with a few drinks, but are they closer to having a drinking problem than they might realize?

The difference between the "almost alcoholic" and the true alcoholic is a matter of degree, according to Dr. Robert L. Doyle, professor of behavioral health at Harvard University. Their new book *Almost Alcoholic* looks at the fine line where a person can be well on their way to full-fledged alcoholism.

The true alcoholic is physically dependent on alcohol, and will experience symptoms of withdrawal if he or she stops. The true alcoholic will answer "yes" and "always" or "almost always" to most or all of the following statements.

Men and women who are somewhere in the almost alcoholic zone, however, will be able to identify with some of these statements as describing their drinking behavior.

1. **You drink to relieve stress.** You have come to rely on a drink or two to "unwind" or "de-stress."
2. **Your drinking may be related to one or more health problems.** You have hypertension, diabetes, or are a cancer survivor, but you don't realize that even a couple of drinks can worsen those conditions and increase your risk for cancer recurring.
3. **You drink alone.** Though there was a time when you almost always drank only in the company of others, these days you are just as likely to have one or more drinks when you are alone.
4. **You look forward to drinking.** You find yourself looking forward to that cocktail, glass of wine, or beer while you are on the way home after work. Or you find yourself glancing at your watch to see how close it is to Happy Hour.
5. **You find that drinking helps you overcome your shyness.** You've discovered that a drink or two - either before a social engagement or shortly after it starts - helps you "come out of your shell" and enables you to have a better time.
6. **You drink to relieve boredom or loneliness.** You are retired, widowed, a single parent, or unemployed. You feel lonely or bored at times, and you find that a drink or two is comforting.
7. **You drive after drinking.** You may never have been pulled over for driving while intoxicated, but you

definitely have driven when your blood alcohol level was over the legal limit.

8. **You drink to maintain a "buzz".** You're a "sipper." You do not down your drinks quickly, nor do you drink to the point where you pass out. Rather, you like to keep drinking slowly so as to maintain a "buzz."
9. **Your performance at work is not what it used to be.** If you look at it objectively you are not as sharp at work these days as you were a couple of years ago. This may be reflected in mistakes, a poorer annual performance evaluation, or less of a merit raise.
10. **You aren't comfortable in social situations where there is no drinking.** You are likely to turn down invitations to social events where you know that no one will be drinking, or where alcoholic beverages are prohibited.

Are you an almost alcoholic?

Source: Harvard Health Letter

WHAT'S WHITE COAT HYPERTENSION?

An elevated blood pressure due to stress and anxiety of a doctor's visit is commonly referred to as white coat hypertension. One elevated reading at the doctor's office doesn't necessarily mean you have pre-hypertension or hypertension. Your doctor will take several readings to determine if it's just a case of the jitters or if you truly have high blood pressure.

Monitoring blood pressure at home by a blood pressure cuff or at a pharmacy can help you gauge your true blood pressure reading, but you should get your pressure checked by a professional at least once a year or as your doctor advises.

Always keep in mind that you can help control your blood pressure by making healthy lifestyle choices, such as eating a diet low in sodium and rich in fruits and vegetables, exercising at least 30 minutes a day, not smoking and limiting alcohol consumption.

Source: Johns Hopkins Health Alerts

EXERCISE MAKES YOU THINK

Studies have shown that a physically fit older person can react to mental challenges just as quickly as unfit individuals who are decades younger. And clinical trials have demonstrated that regular, brisk walking can improve a wide range of cognitive skills, such as concentrating, thinking quickly, organizing thoughts, and answering complex questions."

Source: The Fitness Bulletin

10,000 STEPS A DAY

How many steps do you take in a day? Most of us average only about 2,000 to 3,000, says Andrea Dunn, PhD, of the Cooper Institute for Aerobic Research. She says we should be taking 10,000.

A pedometer, available at most sporting goods stores, will quickly tell you just how many you do take. If you're trying to lose weight, 18,000 is a reasonable goal, says Dunn.

Source: Prevention

IS CIGAR SMOKING SAFER THAN CIGARETTE SMOKING?

No.

Despite what you might have heard, cigar smoking isn't safer than cigarette smoking — even if you don't intentionally inhale the smoke. Like cigarette smoking, cigar smoking poses serious health risks, including:

- **Cancer.** All tobacco smoke contains chemicals that can cause cancer, and cigar smoke is no exception. Regular cigar smoking increases the risk of several types of cancers, including cancers of the mouth, lip, tongue, throat, esophagus, larynx and lung.
- **Lung and heart disease.** Regular cigar smoking increases the risk of lung diseases, including emphysema and chronic bronchitis. It also might increase the risk of heart disease, such as coronary artery disease.
- **Oral disease.** Cigar smoking has been linked to oral and dental disease, such as gum disease and tooth loss.

Cigar smoking also exposes you to:

- **Nicotine.** Cigars, like cigarettes, contain nicotine, the substance that can lead to tobacco dependence. A single full-size cigar can contain as much nicotine as do several cigarettes. If you inhale cigar smoke, you can get as much nicotine as if you smoked cigarettes. And even if you don't intentionally inhale, large amounts of nicotine can be absorbed through the lining of your mouth. Smoking cigars instead of cigarettes doesn't reduce your risk of nicotine dependence.
- **Secondhand smoke.** Secondhand smoke from cigars contains the same toxic chemicals that secondhand cigarette smoke does. This type of

smoke can cause or contribute to lung cancer and heart disease. It also increases the risk and severity of childhood asthma, ear infections, and upper and lower respiratory infections in children. Plus, cigars often burn for longer periods of time, which leads to more secondhand smoke in the air.

Switching from cigarette smoking to cigar smoking can be particularly harmful because you might inhale cigar smoke the way you inhaled cigarette smoke. The more cigars you smoke and the deeper you inhale, the greater the risks.

The only safe level of cigar smoking is none at all. Instead of trying to choose between cigarette smoking and cigar smoking, try to quit tobacco entirely.

Source: Mayo Clinic HealthLetter

HOW MANY PUSHUPS?

Here's how many pushups the average man can do in one minute using good form (straight back and legs, chest lowered to within 6 inches of the floor)

Age	Number of pushups
20-29	33
30-39	27
40-49	21
50-59	15
60-69	15

Source: Men's Health

HEALTHY AGING

Older Americans are remarkably healthy these days. However, healthy aging cannot be taken for granted. Nearly half of older Americans suffer from arthritis, about one-third have high blood pressure or heart disease, and more than one-tenth have diabetes. Cancer and osteoporosis are also prevalent as we age.

Fortunately, these disorders, and the disabilities that can accompany them, can often be prevented or delayed until much later in life. Extensive research has shown that genes account for only about one-third of the health problems associated with aging.

Lifestyle factors have a greater impact on health during middle and late life than in early adulthood.

Source: Archives of Internal Medicine

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TRUE OR FALSE: TEA IS GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH

Tea has developed a reputation as a healthy habit, but whether that reputation is deserved is questionable. Green tea especially has sparked the interest of consumers looking to give their health a boost.

Given tea's popularity, researchers have taken steps to explore its purported health benefits. Evidence is inconclusive, and many of the highly publicized results claiming that you can reap health benefits from tea have been drawn from low-quality studies. Another reason for positive findings may be that tea drinkers in general may have healthier lifestyles.

Among the findings that may be more reliable but still require further research before any conclusions can be reached about their validity:

- Black and green tea may help lower blood pressure and cholesterol.
- Black and green tea may help protect against ovarian, bladder, esophageal and pancreatic cancers.
- The caffeine in tea is associated with increased mental alertness (as it is for all caffeinated beverages).
- Regular tea -- or caffeine -- consumption may delay or reduce the risk of developing Parkinson's disease.

What's behind the health claims? The four primary types of teas -- green, black, oolong and white -- are all made from the leaf of the *Camellia sinensis* plant. The differences among types of tea come from the way they're processed. These teas and other types contain compounds called polyphenols -- potent antioxidants that can prevent and reverse damage wrought by the environment on our cells' DNA. Polyphenols are thought to help protect the heart and blood vessels, prevent inflammation, lessen joint deterioration and protect the cartilage between bones.

What about herbal tea? Herbal teas actually aren't teas at all: Rather, they're infusions of medicinal plants. Like teas, they've been used for centuries as folk remedies. Limited research (most of it conducted in test tubes and animals instead of on humans) hints that they may confer some health benefits.

Source: Johns Hopkins Health Alert

FOODS THAT CAN WRECK YOUR DIET

Caesar Salad Some foods that we think are healthy can be sneaky little diet wreckers, starting with Caesar salad. Just a small bowl has 300-400 calories and 30 grams of fat, thanks to loads of dressing.

Energy Bars Many of these are simply enhanced candy bars with more calories (up to 500) and a higher price tag. Their compact size also leaves many people unsatisfied

Chicken Burrito With healthy beans and no red meat, what's the problem? About 1,000 calories and plenty of saturated fat -- cheese, sour cream, and the fat in the jumbo flour tortilla all contribute. And when the burrito is as big as your forearm, the serving is just too big.

Enhanced Water Vitamins are commonly added to bottled water and advertised on the front label. But some brands also add sugar, taking water from zero calories to as much as 125. "Often the vitamins don't contribute much, but the calories can contribute a lot.

Low-Fat Yogurt Too often this nutritional superstar — rich in protein and calcium — contains shocking amounts of added sugar. Some brands add 30 or more grams of fructose, sucrose, or other sweeteners. Compare plain to fruited yogurts to see the difference between naturally-occurring milk sugar and added sugar listed on the nutrition facts panel.

Multigrain When you see "multigrain" or "seven grain" on bread, pasta, or waffles, flip the package over and check the nutrition label. Even with more than one type of grain, the product could be made largely from refined grains — such as white flour — which have been stripped of fiber and many nutrients.

Source: WebMD Healthletter

WHY 2% IS NOT LOW FAT

Plain coffee is virtually fat and calorie free. It also supplies healthful phytochemicals, including antioxidants. But add lots of milk or cream and sugar, and it's a different story. Coffee drinks at Starbucks, Dunkin' Donuts, and the like, which typically use whole milk and sugary syrups, can have as many calories as a small meal.

Starbucks recently switched from whole milk to 2% (reduced fat) milk in its standard espresso-based beverages, a good move. But that doesn't mean the drinks are now low in fat or calories. Two-percent milk has only about one-third less fat than whole milk. Thus, a "grande" (16 ounces) caffè latte made with 2% milk still has 190 calories and 7 grams of fat (versus 220 calories and 11

grams of fat when made with whole milk). And a grande White Chocolate Mocha with 2% milk has 400 calories and 11 grams of fat. Super-size that to a “venti” (20 ounces) and you get 510 calories and 15 grams of fat—and that’s without the whipped cream.

For the most fat and calorie savings:

- ✓ Request nonfat or 1% milk, and order smaller sizes. That same grande latte at Starbucks with nonfat milk has 130 calories and no fat; a cappuccino with nonfat milk, only 80 calories.
- ✓ Skip the whipped cream, which adds about another 100 calories and 9 grams of fat.
- ✓ If you want sugar, add your own to unsweetened coffee. One teaspoon of sugar has just 16 calories, but some flavored coffee drinks have the equivalent of 10 or more teaspoons of added sugar (not counting the sugar in milk).
- ✓ Be aware that frozen coffee drinks are often made from presweetened mixes and contain whole milk. Frappuccinos at Starbucks, for instance, usually have about 300 to 400 calories in a grande—and as much as 19 grams of fat.

Source: UC Berkeley Wellness Letter

IT’S OK TO GET MAD; JUST DO IT RIGHT

There’s a right way and a wrong way to get mad. The wrong way is to sulk and stew. The right way is to let your angry feelings out, but appropriately.

“Suppressing anger isn’t good for anybody,” says Deborah Cox, PhD, coauthor of a Southwest Missouri State University study. “It can actually damage our health and self-esteem and can harm relationships if you can’t share our real feelings.” On the other hand, throwing plates and screaming doesn’t help either.

Here’s how she suggests expressing your volatile emotions clearly and effectively:

- First, go inward. Write down your feelings. This will help you to think through and fully express them, and will give you time to decide on the best course of action.
- Then, go outward. Calmly explain to your friend, spouse or co-worker what has angered you and why it has.

- Be patient with yourself. It may take time to become comfortable with this approach, but it will be helpful.

Source: Prevention

AEROBIC CAPACITY

Your aerobic capacity is a measure of your cardiovascular system’s ability to process oxygen. During exercise, your lungs take in oxygen where it is picked up by the bloodstream. Then your heart delivers the oxygenated blood to the working muscles. There the muscles utilize it, producing carbon dioxide, which goes back into the blood to be taken to the lungs for disposal in expired air.

You can test your aerobic capacity with this test. It’s designed for persons 40 years of age and older.

If you don’t exercise regularly or have any medical condition, check with your doctor before taking this test. Stop if during the test any unusual symptoms occur, such as chest discomfort, undue shortness of breath, or pain.

Find a flat track (such as around a football field or a walking trail), where you can measure a one-mile stretch. Using a stop watch, see how long it takes you to walk a mile as fast as you can. Record the time in minutes and seconds; then compare your results with the chart below:

Women (minutes: seconds)

Age	40 - 49	50 - 59	60 - 69
Excellent	<14:12	<14:42	<15:06
Good	14:12-15:06	14:42-15:36	15:06-16:18
Average	15:06-16:06	15:36-17:00	16:18-17:30
Fair	16:06-17:30	17:00-18:05	17:30-19:12
Poor	17:30+	18:05+	19:12+

Men (minutes: seconds)

Age	40 - 49	50 - 59	60 - 69
Excellent	<12:54	<13:24	<14:06
Good	12:54-14:00	13:24-14:24	14:06-15:12
Average	14:00-14:42	14:24-15:12	15:12-16:18
Fair	14:42-15:30	15:12-16:30	16:18-17:18
Poor	15:30+	16:30+	17:28+

Source: Cooper Institute for Aerobics Research.

WHEN YOU EXERCISE

Morning exercise has more impact on high blood pressure.

A recent study showed that AM workouts reduced blood pressure better than PM exercise. Morning exercisers had an average drop in systolic pressure of eight points (which lasted 11 hours), and a 6-point drop in diastolic pressure (for four hours after exercise.)

Evening exercisers showed no significant reductions. Janet Wallace, PhD, of the University of Indiana in Bloomington and author of the study, speculates that morning exercise is more effective because it complements the body's natural biorhythms.

Source: Prevention

WATER HAZARD

You're hiking in the mountains and come upon a free-flowing stream of water. Should you drink the water? Not according to the EPA, who says that 36 percent of the 700,000 miles of rivers and streams it surveyed were too polluted for fish to swim in, much less to drink.

The culprits are bacteria and parasites. Boiling will kill the bacteria, but not necessarily the parasites; iodine tablets may also not have any effect on the parasites.

If you can't carry enough water with you, experts recommend bringing a water filter with a one-micron or smaller pore size to trap microbes.

Source: Prevention

CYCLISTS SHOULD TIP SADDLE DOWN

Cycling can cause back pain if your seat is not adjusted properly. If the angle formed by the spine and pelvic bone is too great, it is estimated that as many as 30 to 70 percent of cyclists will experience some back pain. The solution is simple. Tipping the front end of the seat down by 10 to 15 degrees will reduce the angle and relieve the strain.

Among 40 cyclists who tried this adjustment, 37 reported an easing of back pain.

Source: British Journal of Sports Medicine

DO MEN GET THEIR FAIR SHARE?

By many measures, men are at a health disadvantage compared to women. Here are some often-overlooked realities:

- Men die younger than women. In the U.S. in 2004, life expectancy for males at birth was 5.2 years shorter than for females (male, 75.2 years; female, 80.4 years). This gap has been narrowing in recent years, down from 7.8 years in 1975. Life expectancy for black American men is only 69.8 years, compared with 76.5 for black women. This gender gap varies from country to country, but it prevails worldwide.
- More American men develop cancer and die from it than women, and they do so at earlier ages.

- Though more women develop heart disease and die from it every year in the U.S., they do so at much later ages than men. Men develop heart disease 10 years earlier than women, on average.
- Men are four times more likely to commit suicide, though more women attempt it.
- More than twice as many men die from injuries.
- Men are less likely to seek medical help, or to recognize the value of diet in reducing the risk of heart disease and cancer.

There are no simple explanations for most of this. According to some theories, risk-taking underlies innovation, and thus is a valuable trait, but it can also turn quickly into tragedy. A whole branch of medicine studies the effects of motherhood on women's health, but is fatherhood good (or bad) for men? No one knows.

Source: Mayo Health Letter

MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL

Does jet lag affect football players? Apparently so.

Roger Smith, D.O., a researcher and clinical instructor in sleep medicine at Stanford University, looked at the won-lost records of teams playing on the west coast on Monday nights. He authored a well-publicized study comparing the performance of teams traveling from the east coast to play west coast teams.

He found that west coast teams had a significant advantage because they were playing much closer to their peak performance time of day, which is late afternoon and early evening. East coast teams, on the other hand, were playing at times closer to morning hours, which is typically a time of diminished performance.

Source: Georgia Tech Sports Medicine & Performance Newsletter

REACTION TIME WITH AGING

Reaction time does diminish with age. At ages 35, 45, 55 and 65, it is about 90 percent of what it was at age 25. At age 70 it drops slightly below 90 percent, and then stays there.

In sports, a 10 percent drop is significant, but more important to the aging athlete than reaction time is muscle strength and power. Rapid reaction time isn't an advantage if the body can't do anything about it.

Source: Georgia Tech Sports Medicine & Performance Newsletter

PREVENTING CANCER

Here are 5 ways to reduce your cancer risk:

1. Eat a healthy, low-fat diet.
2. Don't smoke.
3. Cut your exposure to sunlight.
4. Exercise.
5. Reduce contact with environmental toxins such as herbicides and insecticides.

Source: Self

THE LIVING WELL SCALE

You're a perfect 10 if you...

1. Walk 10,000 steps a day or take three 10-minute walks.
2. Count to 10 before you say or do anything in anger.
3. Eat the top 10 antioxidant foods (artichokes, blackberries, beans, plums, apples, cranberries, pecans, raspberries, and blueberries).
4. Talk to each of your children one-on-one for 10 minutes every day.
5. Automatically save 10% of each paycheck and pay an extra \$10 on your monthly credit card bills.
6. Volunteer 10 hours a month to community service or charity.
7. Take 10 minutes for yourself each day. Meditate, stretch, do a hobby, enjoy alone time.
8. Focus on the 10 most important things that you need to get done.
9. Develop a 10-year financial plan.
10. Write down the 10 people or things for which you're most thankful.

Source: Hope Health

10 YEARS YOUNGER

Aerobic activities like jogging or swimming may help people maintain their independence and delay the signs of aging.

The typical aerobic power of a 60-year-old man is only half what it was at age 20, making it more difficult to do any activity without tiring easily. Researchers have found that

regular aerobic activities can help maintain lung function and improve the body's use of oxygen by as much as 10 to 12 biological years.

Source: British Journal of Sports Medicine

HEART RATE

While well-trained athletes usually have a resting heart rate 15 to 20 beats per minutes lower than the normal person, it is not necessarily an indication of one's fitness level. Resting rates can vary anywhere from 50 to 100 beats per minute, and it is difficult to generalize about resting rates and one's level of fitness.

On the other hand, one excellent measure of fitness is the length of time it takes for your heart rate to return to normal after strenuous exercise.

Let's say you are exercising at your Target Heart Rate. After a cool down period, your heart rate should fall by about 12 beats per minute. The quicker it recovers and returns to near normal (usually in between one and three minutes) the stronger it is.

If you are used to exercising at your target heart rate (60% - 80% of 220 minus your age) you might see how long it takes for your heart rate to return to normal after you stop.

Take your walking pulse before you begin exercising. Use this as your normal rate. Then begin exercising at your target heart rate. Take a minute to cool down; then as you continue to walk, begin counting your pulse rate for 15 seconds and multiply by four. See how long it takes for your rate to return to normal.

Source: UC Berkeley Wellness Letter

IT'S THE CALORIES THAT COUNT

The largest-ever controlled study of popular weight-loss plans has weighed in with a surprising conclusion: It doesn't really matter what combination of protein, carbohydrates or fat you consume, at least not on the bathroom scale, as long as you cut calories.

More than 800 overweight or obese adults were assigned to one of four diets, loosely based on such popular plans as the Atkins or Ornish diets. Each group cut calorie intake by about 750 calories. After six months, all four groups averaged a loss of 13 pounds; after two years, participants had kept off about 9 pounds and reduced two inches in waist size, regardless of diet plan. There's no special diet that's better for weight loss than any other researchers concluded.

Source: New England Journal of Medicine