

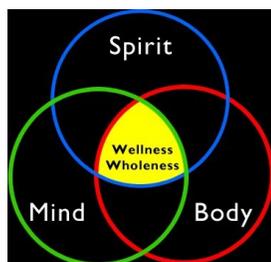
# Getting Fit to Serve

From the desk of  
Shirnett Matthews, MD



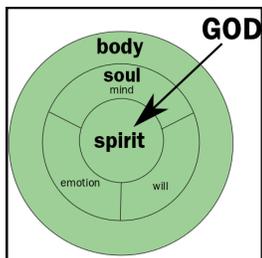
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## **MIND –BODY –SPIRIT THE SPIRITUAL FITNESS CONNECTION**



It's now six months into the New Year and at the beginning of each *new* year we make promises to ourselves to “get healthier”. For most of us that means “lose weight and get in shape”. We join the “*To Do Institute*” with long lists of how we will do better and live better, healthier for the new year. For the most part, we get off to a good start and we see positive results as we make positive choices; with hopes of arriving at wellness. WELLNESS is typically defined as a condition of good physical and mental health, especially when maintained by proper diet, exercise and habits. This balance of mind, body and spirit that leads to wellness is often difficult to achieve and/or maintain because this model puts the emphasis on the individual, which often leads to frustrations and failures and eventually more weight gain and failed promises.

So, as the excitement of the NEW year resolutions have passed and reality has set it, I challenge you to tear up your “to-do-list” and change your focus and become a better you in 2016. I encourage you to change your model from the one above, which focuses on you to this model which focuses on GOD. When we are centered



on God—everything else falls into place. One writer coined this focus “Spiritual Fitness”. The thought is that improving your overall spiritual health “your spirituality” may help you cope with, enjoy and balance your life. *Imagine that—putting God first may actually help you bring your mind and body under subjection.* We are reminded in Psalm 139:14 that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. This speaks to the incredible nature of our physical bodies.

The human body is unique, the most complex organism in the world, and that complexity and uniqueness speak volumes about the mind of its Creator. Every aspect of the body, down to the tiniest microscopic cell, reveals that it is fearfully and wonderfully made. And it functions at its best when it given the right food for fuel and exercise.

So, in my mind, if we are marvelously designed by God—He has completed a good work in us. So, all of our body systems will work together perfectly according to His design.

Because we are designed by God, when we live according to His principles as outlined in the Bible, we will live fuller lives and we are more likely to experience a life of peace, joy and hope. This will create an environment that favors good health. So a foundational motivation for a lifestyle change and a renewing of your mind is to give your body to God. Imagine that—“*sacrificial living*”, as a child of God, the actual Spirit of God lives inside you and He works in your life by faith.

As a part of our commitment to “spiritual wellness”, at the beginning of each year, our church (globally), embarked on a 21-day of prayer and fasting. We view it as a time of renewal and drawing ourselves back or closer to God.

## PUTTING THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE

### WELLNESS AND PREVENTION CHECKLIST FOR ADULTS

**To stay healthy it is important to get the care you need regularly. Find a primary care doctor and begin your preventive care today.**

#### All Adults (ages 18 –65)

- ◇ General Preventive Care  
Complete medical exam each year
- ◇ Blood Pressure  
Yearly or every 3 to 6 mths for those with high blood pressure
- ◇ Cholesterol and annual blood work  
Frequently varies—check with MD
- ◇ Fasting blood glucose or HgbA1c level  
Age 45, or younger if you are over weight with BMI > 25kg/m2 and have other risk factors such as hypertension or high cholesterol
- ◇ Colon/rectal cancer screening  
Starting at age 50—get stool sample test each year; baseline colonoscopy
- ◇ Obesity  
Get body mas index (BMI) checked
- ◇ Eyes  
Vision exam every 2 years; more often if symptoms or risk factors
- ◇ Skin check  
Talk with your doctor, check moles, spots that are changing
- ◇ Teeth  
Dental exam and cleaning every 6 months

#### For Men Only

- ◇ Prostate Cancer Screening  
Guidelines have changed—talk with your doctor

#### For Women only

- ◇ Breast self exam  
Starting age 20, check monthly for changes
- ◇ Mammogram  
Yearly starting at age 40; earlier if risk factors
- ◇ Pelvic exam/pap test  
For younger women <21 years old—talk with your doctor; others every 1 to 3 years as directed by MD
- ◇ Vaccinations (HPV, Flu, Boosters)  
Talk with your doctor
- ◇ Bone Mineral Density (BMD) test  
For women pass menopause and younger than age 65 with risk factors; talk to doctor

We are reminded that fasting is a spiritual discipline of self-denial that brings your will into alignment with the will of God. This process changes your focus from self to God and bring you to a place of complete surrender to Him. When you draw close to God, He draws nigh to you and He can give you the self-control and perseverance you need to make necessary changes to live balanced for the remaining 344 days. Oh but too often, the 21 days pass and we forget about “self-denial” and “self-control” and “surrender”. Now that it is June, 6 months later ... How are you doing? Is your life/focus still God-centered?

## LOSE WEIGHT *WITHOUT* DIET OR EXERCISE

Finding it hard to stick to a diet and exercise plan? Well, there are proven ways/tips to help you lose weight without exercise or an actual “diet” plan. *Here are a few....*

1. **Chew thoroughly and slow down**—decreases your food intake and increases the sensation of feeling full. It takes your brain 20 minutes to register or sense that you are full.
2. **Eliminate sugary drinks and foods**—it is easy to take in massive amounts of excess calories from “empty calories”; foods without nutritional value.
3. **Get enough sleep and decrease stress**—lack of sleep disrupts the appetite-regulating hormones in the body and stress elevates cortisol in your body which helps to store fat and in all the wrong places.

## When is the Best time of the Day to Work Out?



You've committed to squeezing in a workout between your commute and your desk job, but before you embark on this new regimen, you want to know:

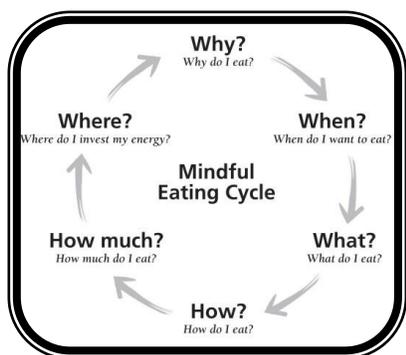
***When's the best time to exercise to ensure you're getting the most out of it?***

Recent research covered by Gretchen Reynolds in The New York Times, suggests that working out early in the morning — before you've eaten breakfast — helps speed weight loss and boost energy levels by priming the body for an all-day fat burn.

## LET'S GET MOVING

***Am I really Hungry?*** Many people who struggle with food react mindlessly to their unrecognized or unexamined triggers, thoughts, and feelings.

The Battle for wellness starts in the mind. The Bible says that God's Word is a divine weapon to help us develop a new way of thinking. 2 Corinthians 10:5 says that we can “demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and ... take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.” We need to change our minds about a number of things, including the value of exercise, what it means to be full, and how we view ourselves and our bodies.



**Have you heard of *Mindful Eating*?** It is a way of becoming more aware of why we eat; and allowing yourself to “eat to live rather than live to eat.”

***Mindful Eating is eating with intention and attention!***

- ◆ Eating with the intention of caring for yourself
- ◆ Eating with the attention necessary for noticing and enjoying your food and its effects on your body

Eating is a natural, healthy, and pleasurable activity for satisfying hunger. However, in our food-abundant, diet-obsessed culture, eating is often mindless, consuming, and guilt-inducing instead. Mindful eating is an

ancient mindfulness practice with profound modern implications and applications for resolving this troubled love-hate relationship with food.

Did you know that there was a process to eating? *According to Dr. Michelle May at AmIHungry.com, there is and it encompasses:*

- ◆ Awareness of your physical and emotional cues
- ◆ Recognition of your non-hunger triggers for eating
- ◆ Learning to meet your other needs in more effective ways than eating
- ◆ Choosing food for both enjoyment and nourishment
- ◆ Eating for optimal satisfaction and satiety
- ◆ Using the fuel you've consumed to live the vibrant life you crave

This broad application makes mindful eating a powerful tool for developing a healthier, happier relationship with food. Ask yourself “*Am I hungry?*”



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