

Health Tips From The Posse

What's the best time to exercise?

BY MARK RACKAY

There are actually people who wake up early in the morning, all rip-roaring happy to get underway with the challenges of a new day. My wife is one of these people. She wakes up every morning happy, chipper and talkative, ready to tackle the day with a great exuberance, and everyone else in the house knows it.

I am not one of them. I inherited my hatred of morning from my grandfather. Nobody spoke to him until he was up for at least an hour. We all knew how dangerous it was to bait him in those early hours. Like him, I can't stand getting up in the morning unless there is a good reason, like going hunting or fishing. Other than that, turn the light back off and leave me alone.

Since I have no option, I get up and exercise in the mornings. I go by that old saying, "Eat a live toad, first thing in the morning, and nothing else worse will happen to you the rest of the day."

That is the reason I do my workout routine, very first thing and get it over with. But is working out in the early morning really the best for your body?

Finding time to exercise can be very difficult, especially when you have a job, spouse, kids, mortgage, bills, taxes and the whole catastrophe as Zorba the Greek once put it. Add in all those domestic duties and the need for some sleep and exercise routines go by the wayside. Sometimes, after a long workday, the last thing you want is more work.

Before we get into any particular benefits about the time to exercise, realize that whenever you can get a workout in, is a good time. The whole idea is not about how many calories you burn, or how many miles you run, it is about getting the workout into your busy day.

Research indicates that there are some benefits to working out first thing in the morning. One obvious reason, for me anyway, is that I get it over with and done before anything else gets in the way. If you do it first, there is no excuse. At the end of the day, many other things can get in the way and prevent you from getting it done.

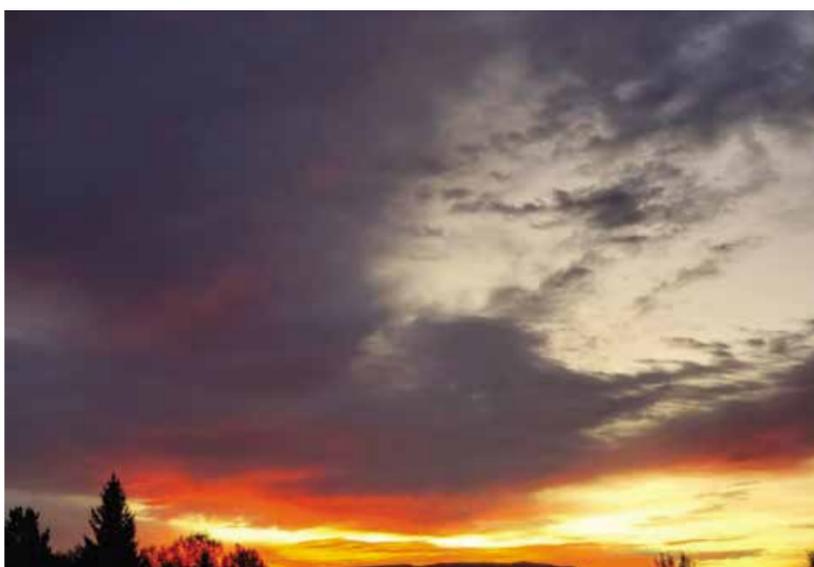
Exercising on an empty stomach really helps get rid of those stored calories from last night's supper. It is proven that you burn more fat on an empty stomach compared to exercising after a meal. Also, your metabolism and the afterburn you benefit from it, lasts much longer when you exercise on an empty stomach, which helps you lose more weight in the long run.

Working out in the morning leaves your body full of endorphins that help keep your mood elevated throughout the day. You will also enjoy the energy burst your body has after a vigorous workout, to help get your day started.

Morning exercise can actually help you get your sleep cycles in check. Working out in the evening can leave you "wide awake and full of energy" making it difficult to fall asleep. Making a habit of morning workouts can shift your circadian rhythm so that your body is more alert in the morning and more tired in the evening, so you fall asleep earlier and get better rest.

Not everything about morning workouts is all peachy. Depending on your bedtime and how much sleep you need, the alarm going off early can get you up in the middle of a deep sleep. This will leave you feeling tired and groggy, and if it happens often enough, you could develop chronic fatigue.

Evening and afternoon workouts have benefits also. Your muscle strength and endurance are greater later in the day, compared to first thing in the morning. Studies have shown that folks who work



Sunrise is a beautiful time of the day, but is it the best time for you to work out? (Special to the MDP and DCI/ Mark Rackay)

out later experience up to 20% longer time before reaching exhaustion.

Your body, both men and women, makes more testosterone during a late in the day workout than one in the morning. Testosterones are necessary for muscle building and strength gains, so if you lift weights, later is better.

Exercise has always been known to help relieve stress. Most people have more built-up stress in the evening from a fun day of life's activities, compared to the morning people. A good workout leaves you with a kick of endorphins that can help you get relief from a long day.

Probably the best reason for an evening workout is to change your lifestyle. If all you do in the evening is crash in front of the boob-tube and fill up on snacks or sweets, switching to a workout can eliminate the bad habit. Once you get into the habit of evening workouts, you will probably never miss those old bad habits.

For a very few people, working out in

the evenings may mess up your sleep routine, especially if you can't exercise at the same time each night. Sometimes working late, or activities with kids at school, can cause your normal time to be delayed. This delay may also delay your normal bedtime and can cause fatigue.

The moral of the story is there is no bad time to exercise, get it in when you can. For me, I will stick to getting it over with first thing in the morning. That way, I get to be quiet and not be bothered with my wife's happy exuberance for a new day until I am done exercising and looking for coffee.

Mark Rackay is a columnist for the Montrose Daily Press and avid hunter who travels across North and South America in search of adventure and serves as a Director for the Montrose County Sheriff's Posse. For information about the Posse call 970-252-4033 (leave a message) or email info@mcspi.org

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