

Evolve

The Three Pillars of Health

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From Our President

Welcome to the Fall Season! As the pace picks up with busy back to school schedules, take a moment to read the "Three Pillars of Health" for strategies on creating calm in the midst of life's storms. Also in this update, news about our new Balance for Life program, how to participate in the STOP Cancer 5K that BDI is helping to sponsor, and signing up for YOUR annual FITNESS PHYSICAL.

Be well!

Jen Gamboa, DPT, OCS
President

The main reason that people seek healthcare is not to prevent dying, but to improve living (*attributed to the World Health Organization, SF-36 background document*). While this seems to be such an intuitive statement, the process and system of healthcare does not always lend itself to such empowerment. What then, do we, as consumers, clients, and patients, bring to the picture of healthcare that enables us to improve our own living? Do we control any of the physical, psychological, and social well-being pieces that define our health?

The clinicians at BDI have been providing interdisciplinary care for 16 years to proactive clients striving to achieve, maintain, and sustain robust living. We have come to understand that there are three essential attributes (or pillars) that help define an individual's perspective on health and healthiness. When these pillars are firmly in place, clients are optimistic, less anxious, more confident, and feel well. When these pillars are fragile and unfamiliar, clients do not feel well.

Perception. Resilience. Breath. These are three pillars of health that can instill confidence, provide comfort, and improve living. They are distinct, yet interdependent: lending strength or fragility to one another. What then, can each one of us do, to strengthen our pillars of health?



Perception. Perception of health is often measured in terms of one's sense of limitations in physical and social activities or roles due to physical or mental health problems. Sense of limitation is influenced by energy or fatigue, sleep, good nutrition, awareness of pain, psychological distress or happiness. Those perceptions will influence whether or not an individual is "getting better" or "not getting worse". Good sleep, nutrition, a sense of being connected to others/social support, and a sense of humor can go a long way towards refilling a half empty glass.

Resilience. Resilience is marked by the ability to recover readily from illness, change, misfortune, or stress. How do we manage stress? Our fight or flight response is primal, powerful, and lifesaving, but how is our relaxation response? We have retained our ability to rev up our systems in response to threat, but how is our counter-response? The one that decreases heart rate, blood pressure, breathing and metabolic rate; The one that allows us to recuperate from the harmful effects of stress and regain our natural ability to cope with additional stress.

When we don't return to baseline (relaxation), we actually accelerate cellular breakdown, and increase the chemical mediators of pain. This is where the third pillar comes in – to help us generate our own Relaxation Response.

Breath. Deep, regular breathing is associated with relaxation and meditation. We can use breath to manage our response and counter-response to stress. In 2008, Dusek et al. actually measured regenerative cellular changes that were induced by the Relaxation Response. There are many ways to strengthen our relaxation response, including good sleep, nutrition, exercise, and social support. Breathing exercises can also help elicit a relaxation response. One useful technique is to place a brightly colored sticker on your hand, your phone, your computer, or some other place that you see frequently. When you see the dot; stop, take five deep breathes in through your nose and out through your nose, concentrating on moving the air across the skin between your upper lip and nose. The detailed focus on the dot and the skin will help you become still in the midst of “busy”– and should help you regain perspective and a little relaxation. It may take many bouts of practice throughout the day, but you have to breath anyway – might as well be intentional about it and use it to your advantage.

There are many factors that contribute to health and well-being. We certainly do not want to trivialize the challenges people face and the difficulty of some people's lives, but we do hope to highlight that certain aspects of health and healthcare are a journey of building personal fortitude – anchored by perception, resilience, and breath. Go forth, build your health, and live well.

Body Dynamics is a proud sponsor of the annual Cancer Prevention and Treatment Fund 5K.

Walk or Run. Have Fun. Save Lives!

Saturday, September 17th
Bluemont Park, Arlington VA @ 10:00 am

Please join the BDI Team in the race to prevent cancer! The first 10 clients to sign up will receive complimentary registration in the 5K, a BDI T-shirt to wear during the run/walk, and a free 30 minute Functional Movement Screening performed in our office. Our certified massage therapists will also be offering free sports massages at the finish line. Don't miss out on this opportunity, not only to take a stand against cancer, but to improve your own movement and health! Talk to our Front Desk for more details or to join our team.

The Body Dynamics Annual Fitness Physical is on Saturday, October 1st

How Fit Are You?

For \$99 and 90 minutes, our licensed physical therapists and certified athletic trainers will:

Evaluate: your current fitness level, and measure your posture and alignment, upper and lower body strength, flexibility, agility, balance, coordination, core strength and aerobic endurance.

Rank: your results against national averages.

Prescribe: a matched, individualized exercise program that meets you where you are. Your personalized plan is tailored to your specific needs, and will give you the tools to take control of your fitness safely, effectively, and sustainably.

Meet Goals. Beat Health Threats. Minimize Disease Risk.

Availability is limited, so call today to reserve your spot!

Body Dynamics is pleased to announce the inauguration of *Balance for Life*, a new program designed to support active senior adults. This five week long course will focus on fall prevention, education, and balance exercises. Please contact our front desk for more information about this exciting new program.