

Huff and Puff

The title of today's Health and Temperance presentation is "Huff and Puff."

The subject of temperance, in all its bearings, has an important place in the work of salvation. *Testimonies for the Church, volume 9, p112 by Ellen G. White*

God's word declares: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." *1 Corinthians 10:31 NKJV*

In a simple dartboard target, there are a series of concentric rings around a central circle. The central circle is the bullseye. Hitting the bullseye results in the greatest number of points—the greatest benefit for your effort. Hitting succeeding rings outside the central circle result in lesser number of points—less benefit for your efforts. The greatest benefit for your efforts results from accumulating the greatest number of points—the greatest reward for your efforts throughout the period of play.

In a similar manner, "hitting" the bullseye in our lifestyle results in the greatest benefit. So, in our Health and Temperance time together, we will look at what our God has told us has the greatest benefit for both our short lives here on earth AND our future eternal lives with Jesus in Heaven.

The central bullseye is that which God first told Adam and Eve immediately following their creation. And God said, "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. *Genesis 1:29 NKJV*

In health and in sickness, pure water is one of heaven's choicest blessings. Its proper use promotes health. It is the beverage which God provided to quench the thirst of animals and man. Drunk freely, it helps to supply the necessities of the system and assists nature to resist disease. *Ministry of Healing, p237, E.G. White*

Proper periods of sleep and rest and an abundance of physical exercise are essential to health of body and mind. So today, we will discuss physical exercise as a benefit to our health—both physical and spiritual.

In the Fall of 1976, my weight was 225 pounds. Six months later, in 1977, my weight had dropped to 195 pounds through simple changes in my diet. Twenty-five years later, my weight had dropped to 165 pounds through adopting the many dietary counsels of the Bible and the Testimonies of Jesus plus a light exercise program to restore the shape of my body.

Eleven years later, my weight had dropped to 150 pounds through even more changes to my diet to comply with the overlooked or unadopted dietary counsels of the Bible and the Testimonies of Jesus—especially those found in the "Counsels on Diet and Foods" and in "Counsels on Health", both written by Ellen G. White.

Did exercise play a role in this steady weight loss? Yes, but only to a limited extent. Exercise can drive a limited weight loss of around ten pounds but the major effect is on the strength and shape of the body as weight is lost.

In 1986, I ruptured my Achilles tendon which required surgery and a period of rest to heal. To avoid adhesions from the body tissues trying to grow together where they had been cut, it was recommended that I use a stationary bicycle to flex my foot and also extend the shortened Achilles tendon.

I liked the effect of exercise on the shape of my body so I slowly over the years added to the stationary bicycle other forms of exercise such as walking outdoors and on a treadmill and working out on a weight lifting station.

“But,” you will ask, “What is the “best” exercise?”

Every thing in this world of sin exhibits a distribution of strength: materials or animal including humans. If that strength distribution is sufficiently stronger than any of the many random stresses to which our machines or bodies are subject, then there will be no failure. But, as is often the case, some of the strength distribution at the weaker end extends into the higher stresses that may be encountered.

In addition, as materials and animals—including humans—age, the strength distribution degrades. We become weaker as we age! The “random” nature of failures is, thus, a consequence of the distribution and degradation of the strength as well as the random occurrence of stresses.

When we attempt to determine a “best” exercise, one of the elements to consider is the safety of the exercise—the control over the occurrence of excessive stress events. For example, many sports such as football, soccer, basketball, even tennis, have obvious potentials for unexpected and uncontrolled damaging stress events.

So, how might we analyze what is the best exercise? First, we need to define our criteria. For example—

- Strength—both muscle strength and bone strength.
- Stamina—endurance and heart rate (both maximum and resting).
- Safety—freedom from danger.
- Productivity—any output gain other than physical health.

Swimming, walking, running, weight lifting, casual sports, and gardening are just some of the popular forms of exercise.

A weighted effectiveness for each exercise and each criteria is established—according to your opinion. There are no effectiveness ratings that are commonly accepted although many are close. The numbers under each exercise MUST add up to 100%.

Priority—How important are the criteria of strength, stamina, safety, and productivity to you. The priority numbers add up to 100%.

To determine the ranking for each exercise given your priorities, the number under the exercise and in line with the criteria are multiplied together and each result for all the criteria are added together to give a ranking number.

For a young male, often the goal is to achieve a muscular physique. So, weight lifting is the “best” exercise although not the safest.

In the middle years of adulthood, many adults begin to feel the declining strength and stamina. And, while they are somewhat more concerned about the safety of the exercise, they are focused on regaining what is declining. So, running is a popular exercise with swimming a tie also.

In the advanced years, muscles are going away despite exercise. Safety and the awakening concern for bone density make walking the best exercise with swimming and gardening becoming good alternatives.

Of course, if we want the exercise to produce more than just good health, gardening—or some similar physical exercise that has a useful product—can become the “best” choice.

Those who are feeble and indolent should not yield to their inclination to be inactive, thus depriving themselves of air and sunlight, but should practice exercising out of doors in walking or working in the garden. They will become very much fatigued, but this will not injure them....

Counsels on Health, p200, Ellen G. White Continuing with *Counsels on Health, page 200:*

It is not good policy to give up the use of certain muscles because pain is felt when they are exercised. The pain is frequently caused by the effort of nature to give life and vigor to those parts that have become partially lifeless through inaction. The motion of these long-disused muscles will cause pain, because nature is awakening them to life.

Walking, in all cases where it is possible, is the best remedy for diseased bodies, because in this exercise all the organs of the body are brought into use. *Testimonies for the Church, volume 3, p78, Ellen G. White*

There is no exercise that can take the place of walking. By it the circulation of the blood is greatly improved. *Ibid*

Now, Excuse me, . . . I am late for my walk.