

EASTLANE

The Fast Lane Turns 20! Happy Birthday!

By Linda Brown-Kuhn, Editor, The Fast Lane

Toot the horns, spray some silly string and belt out happy birthday to the 20-year old Fast Lane! She's all grown up.

The newsletter's come a long way from its inception when Masters swimmer and Berkeley Masters coach, Eric Snyder, coaxed me into developing a newsletter for Masters swimmers in NJ to replace a one-page (front and back) publication. We named it The Fast Lane and it debuted in December of 1987. I'm a writer by profession but I'd never tackled a newsletter before so it was an intense learning experience in the beginning. I've continued to learn as time has passed and though I sometimes grumble about the amount of time this "volunteer" job takes, I really enjoy gathering articles and writing about the world of Masters swimming in New Jersey and beyond.

Of course, I haven't been in this alone. For many years, a cheerful core of Berkeley teammates helped fold, staple, stamp and label the 400-500 newsletters, sometimes on deck after practice and more often while waiting for our pizza to be served

at Dimaio's after Friday night workouts. When I had my first child, who will soon turn 13, breast-stroker, Dave Siconolfi, stepped in to take over a few issues while I tried to figure out the whole parenting thing (I'm still working on that one). Then about six years ago the newsletter received a tremendous boost when swimmer and graphic designer, Jeanne Coon, agreed to take over the design side. She totally changed the look of the Fast Lane all for the better and I was lucky to have her work with me for five years. And luck still seems to be with me as age-group coach and swimmer Karin Adams has taken over as the Fast Lane's graphic designer. She's brought her own flair to the Fast Lane since she started working on it at the start of this year. I'm always eager to see what she'll come up with, as I'm sure you are, and she never disappoints. Many thanks also go to teammates Eric Marquard and Pat Quinlan who gamely jumped in and each put out several issues in the interim between Jeanne and Karin. And I can't forget my kids, Corey and Abbey, and my husband Mark who have uncomplainingly helped over the years.

As the Fast Lane rounds the two decade bend, I'm hoping it will continue to improve with age, like we all hope our times do as we age up. I've got an eye on the USMS best newsletter award which I'd love the Fast Lane to receive. So twenty great years behind and the future looks promising!

Congratulations to Ed Tsuzuki and Chris McGiffin for being appointed

to national positions in the USMS organization. Ed has been appointed Chair of the Records and Tabulation Committee. Chris has accepted the Chair position for the USMS Marketing Committee for 2008.

Editor's note: If they are wanted as chairs at the national level, you know they must be good. We're all fortunate to have Ed and Chris working so diligently to further Masters swimming in New Jersey.

McGiffin and Tsuzuki Go National

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Light Those Candles!

Austin Newman 90-94
Robert Stricker 75-79
Kenneth Dawson 75-79
Edward Breisacher 75-79
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Charles Whelan 65-69
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John Hunt 65-69
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Christine Rodgers 55-59
Michele Pfaff 55-59
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Jack Wilson 55-59
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Christine Peters 55-59
Holly Houston 55-59
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Don Denny 50-54
James Walsh 50-54
Paul Swanson 50-54
Carol Malone 50-54
Joe Wilson 50-54
Jonathan Olesky 50-54
Clarence Tomsen 50-54
Kevin Kilcullen 50-54
Janet DeBiase 50-54
Michael Ciolino 50-54
Ron Loria 50-54
Jane Kilcullen 50-54
Richard Schluter 50-54
Patricia Quinlan 50-54
Carol Mateo 45-49
Ed Tsuzuki 45-49
David Feldman 45-49
Martha Coy 45-49
Joann Rean 45-49
Rick Hrabchak 45-49

Happy Birthday to the following 96 November and December babies:

Chris Near 45-49
Ellen Kranefuss 45-49
Douglas Roth 45-49
Kurtis Baker 45-49
Maribeth Bowen 45-49
Craig Gruber 45-49
Brenda Ziegler 45-49
Michele Faul 45-49
Linda Flanagan 45-49
James Wood 45-49
Mary Goilfoyle 45-49
Anne Clewell 45-49
David Richards 40-44
Lynne Lopez 40-44
Eric Marquard 40-44
Norma Fallon 40-44
Holly Dressler 40-44
Elizabeth Bromley 40-44
Jacqueline Jankewicz 40-44
Joshua Raymond 40-44
William Henderson 40-44
Scott Stallwood 40-44
Kathleen Fowler 40-44
Gregory Greene 40-44
Maryann Howes 40-44
Jack Carr 40-44
Debbie Iuliano 40-44
Alexandra Lopez 40-44
Ronald LaBenski 40-44
Robert Phillips 35-39
Nicholas Armstrong 35-39
Ann Dandurand 35-39
Cherri Marcinko 35-39
Kyle Kavanaugh 35-39
Debra Esposito 35-39
Jennifer Bauman 35-39
Tara Clarke 30-34
Ahmed Elghitany 30-34
David Severe 30-34
Srinivasan Mudambi 30-34
Emily McKimmy 30-34
Rebecca Rudy 30-34
Tyler Myers 30-34
Vanja Sikirica 25-29
James Specht 25-29
Stacey Brower 25-29
Megan Yonych 20-24
Christopher Kemp 19-24





January 2008 Colonies Zone LMSC One Hour Postal National Championship Challenge

Your two Zone Reps on the USMS Long Distance Committee, Susan Kirk (NJ) and me, Ann Svenson (PV), are challenging all LMSCs in the Zone to a competition in the One Hour Postal (entry form: <http://www.usms.org/longdist/ldnats08/1hentry.pdf>). The event was started in 1977 by my team, DC Masters, and has grown to be the largest USMS National Championship with over 2000 swimmers each year. New England Masters is the perennial winner of the extra large club division with over 200 members competing. Let's see how close the rest of us (as LMSCs) can come to them. It would be based on percentage of members (as of 1/31/2008) participating. Awards will be presented at the Colonies Zone SCY Championships in April.

—Ann Svenson

Record Setters

Congratulations to Danielle Ogier, 55
for setting the following

New NJLMSC Short Course Meters Records
at the First Colony Masters Meet in Houston, Texas
on October 13, 2007!

50 Free 32.60 200 Free 2:32.96
100 Breast 1:35.56 100 IM 1:22.20
200 IM 2:57.20

5K USMS National Postal Championships

Thomas Alne 18-24 GSM 1:11:15.82
1st place National Champion!

Jim Ryan 55-59 GSM 1:11:00.29
2nd place!

10K USMS National Postal Championships

Jim Ryan 55-59 GSM 2:27:22.16
1st place National Champion!

Burn Off Those Holiday Calories Workout

This workout comes courtesy of
Melanie Fink, Coach of JCC MetroWest



Warm-up: 300 Choice stroke

Drill Set w/ Fins:
4 x 100 (50 Kick, 50 Backstroke)

Main Set:

16 x 25 on 0:30, IM Order or Free
8 x 50 on 1:00, Free, Alternate Breathe
4 x 100 on 1:45, IM Order or Free, hold 1:30 pace
2 x 200 on 3:00, Free, Alternate Breathe

Drill Set w/ Fins:

4 x 100 (25 Catchup + 25 One Arm-Left + 25
One Arm-Right + 25 Free-Minimize Strokes)

Cool-Down: 300 Choice stroke

3,000 yards

Logo Contest!

We're looking for a sharp new
New Jersey LMSC logo
and we'd love to see what you
creative types can do!

To check out our old logo,
go to www.njmasters.org.

All registered USMS swimmers
are eligible to submit designs
by January 15, 2008.

Send your design entries or
questions to: Linda Kuhn at
lbk@sprintmail.com
or snail mail them to
451 Sweet Hollow Rd.
Bloomsbury, NJ 08804

2007 USMS Annual Convention Report Anaheim, CA September 26–30, 2007

By Chris McGiffin, NJ LMSC Delegate, member of USMS Legislation and Marketing Committees

It occurs to me, as a member of the United States Masters Swimming organization, that I often take for granted the mission, objectives and goals that help create the foundation of a national, all-volunteer, non-profit service provider. Like many, I pay my dues, go to my workouts, attend my meets and open water swims; even join in the many social events that support a feeling of membership. Unlike most, however, the slumber of my daily routine is awakened when I travel to the USMS Convention as a delegate from the New Jersey Local Masters Swimming Committee (NJ LMSC).

The theme for this year's Convention in Anaheim, CA, was borrowed appropriately from Disneyland itself – "Made for You and Me."

While some may conjure up a vision of Mickey and the gang greeting tourists at one of the large theme parks bearing Disney's name, in the context of Convention it emphasized the prevailing message we as delegates were tasked with considering both in Anaheim, and at home, in our local Masters swimming communities. As an organization, USMS was founded by members, has operated with volunteer members at all levels, and exists to serve all of its members in every possible way. The USMS of today, however, while much different than what it was at its inception in 1970, still relies on its commitment to its members to grow and prosper.

That understanding - members as customers - and that motivation - to remain the preeminent adult aquatic fit-

ness service provider - serve to energize delegates as we return to our daily Masters swimming lives. New Jersey is no exception, as we hope to convey in this series of delegate reports to you, the individual members of the NJ Masters Swimming Community.

NJ's Delegates

This year the NJ LMSC sent four delegates to the USMS Convention - more than any number of delegates in the tenure of our LMSC. Back in June, as the Board discussed the Convention budget, and examined the options, we noticed that NJ had an opportunity to send four delegates. In 2007, the NJ LMSC had three Board members serving on USMS Committees: Susan Kirk serves on the Open Water and Long Distance Committee, Ed Tsuzuki serves on the Records & Tabulations Committee, and I serve on the Marketing and Legislation Committees. With two of us serving on "standing" committees (Sue and myself), and thereby automatic delegates, we realized that we could still send two others delegates by virtue of our membership exceeding 500. As Vice Chair of Records & Tabulations,

and former delegate, Ed was a logical choice to return to Convention to represent New Jersey. That left one delegate vacancy to fill to meet the maximum delegates possible for our LMSC. We took another look at the budget, and collectively, the Board and the selected delegates agreed that we should pursue the option of sending another willing and eager volunteer. That final delegate vacancy was filled by our LMSC's most recent volunteer addition, Karin Adams.

No stranger to swimming and coaching, Karin has been a registered USMS Masters swimmer since 2005, and currently serves as the Fast Lane Newsletter Graphic Designer. In her day job, Karin serves as Head Coach of the age group swim team at the West Essex YMCA. After some slight arm-twisting, Karin joined Sue, Ed, and Chris to her first-ever USMS Convention. It was a good fit all around. With Sue, Ed, and I obligated to attend our respective committee meetings, Karin helped cover other significant meetings that would have otherwise gone unattended. Not to mention, as a new delegate, she would develop her impressions and be a fourth voice for NJ Masters Swimming both at Convention and upon her return.



Photo Above, Left to Right: Susan Kirk, Chris McGiffin, USMS President and ex-NJ Masters swimmer Rob Copeland, and Karin Adams enjoying the USMS Convention.

USMS's First Executive Director

Another first-time attendee at USMS Convention was the organization's first Executive Director, Todd Smith. Todd "comes to USMS from USA Diving, Inc., where he was Executive Director and CEO for the past 25 years. During that period, Smith developed and implemented USA Diving's strategic plan, which included creation of an online membership and event registration, and he increased the organization's annual budget by 1100 percent. Smith directed the national office and oversaw all business operations—including finance, budget, compliance, human resources, public relations and general administration" (usms.org press release).

Todd's knowledge and experience will be a tremendous asset as he helps lead USMS toward the future. As the organization turns its attention to renewing its emphasis on member services and benefits, the vision emerging is one that incorporates a strategy to provide new and improved programs and services to our members, volunteer leadership teams and staff.

The Plan

Revised and updated in 2007, the USMS Strategic Plan essentially establishes the organization's objectives and goals related to its operation. **In the process of building the Strategic Plan, it was determined that the organization's "most significant strengths are our people, coaches, clubs and our organizational culture."** The weaknesses identified during this evaluation related to "our organizational structure, our weaker zones and LMSCs, and our lack of a brand image that is consistent with our mission and values." The conclusions of the Strategic Plan analysis "reflect the view that in order to bring the benefits of swimming to adults, we should grow our membership. Growth will come from two sources: recruitment of new members (through better marketing and branding

strategies), and through better retention of existing members (by providing better value to our members)" (USMS Strategic Plan 2007).

The outcome of the Strategic Plan analysis resulted in several priorities that will define the organization's focus over the coming years. Among the priorities to be pursued, many are either already underway or in the task force planning stages – the realignment of the committee structure and clarification of committee definitions, developing a branding strategy, club development, LMSC development, and developing a succession plan for human resources.

USMS Committees	Besides the new Executive Director and a Board of Directors, USMS operates primarily through various committees (see list at left) and ultimately by formal House of Delegates decisions. During Convention each committee was asked to evaluate its missions, objectives, and goals in the context of the Strategic Plan.
Championship	As USMS grows and evolves, new opportunities surface to cultivate the relationship it has with its members. One such opportunity involves providing members with a more convenient and effective process for membership registration. As delegates convened this year in Anaheim, easily one of the most anticipated topics was the status of online registration. As expected, the Registration Committee meeting focused on the changes occurring as the development
Coaches	
Communications	
Editorial	
Endowment	
Executive	
Finance	
History & Archives	
International	
Legislation	
Long Distance	
Marketing	
Officials	
Planning (dissolved)	
Recognition and Awards	
Records and Tabulation	
Rules	
Sports Medicine, Health and Safety	
Zone	

As USMS grows and evolves, new opportunities surface to cultivate the relationship it has with its members. One such opportunity involves providing members with a more convenient and effective process for membership registration. **As delegates convened this year in Anaheim, easily one of the most anticipated topics was the status of online registration.** As expected, the Registration Committee meeting focused on the changes occurring as the development

and implementation of the new USMS Online Registration system approaches its launch date. An outside vendor, Club Assistant was hired to complete the system development on September 26, 2007 (for a press release and more information, visit www.clubassistant.com). The committee announced that LMSCs must have their own electronic account for money transfers from the online registration transactions that occur. The launch is expected to consist of two phases. First, Registrars from each LMSC will have their own access to the online registration system to register USMS Clubs followed closely by handling the initial member paper submissions. USMS Clubs must be entered into the system before its members can affiliate with them. If a USMS Club is not registered before its members, then those member registrations will instead be classified as "Unattached." The second phase, projected to occur by year-end 2007, will enable members to individually register online with USMS. For many, the days of mailing a printed registration form and personal check to their LMSC Registrar are numbered. For others, the existing registration method will remain available, with LMSC Registrars entering printed member registrations into the system upon receipt.

Online Registration

Long viewed as a desirable option by many, the online approach to processing member registration is finally a dream coming true. For 2008, LMSC Registrars will still be responsible for remitting the USMS membership cards. The Registration Committee members also approved a motion to evaluate the possibility of implementing a "rolling membership," rather than the current membership calendar year format. Such "rolling" memberships are common with other adult athletic organizations and proving popular with their members who appreciate a full year's membership regardless of when they join. Club Assistant currently provides similar member services for USA Swimming, USA Water Polo, USA Triathlon, and

("Open Water..." continued)

Masters swimming is spent indoors, swimming back-and-forth staring at the lines on the bottom of the chlorinated pools at our local facilities, one can begin to understand why people seek out other more exciting locations to enjoy their aquatic pursuits. Let's see ... summer at the beach navigating a mile or two, or stuck indoors doing the same couple miles circle-swimming in a single lane, with flip turns, push offs, and the usual chemical fragrance ... makes you wonder how we tolerate it for all those colder months. **To Dieter, and to an increasing number of Masters swimmers, the warmer days of May and June signal the start of the open water season.**

This past summer was no different. But, in many ways it was for the several Masters swimmers taking the open water plunge for their first time. While some may have competed in pool meets before, there is relief from many who would prefer not to climb onto the starting block, listen to the commands of the starter, then dive from that slanted perch while keeping their goggles firmly on their eyes. And, all the rules, not to mention those dreaded flip turns ... For all those concerned with splits and finish times, well let's just say that time in an ocean swim goes by at a much more acceptable pace. In fact, every ocean race is conducted in nautical terms, and as the conditions (wind, current, waves, temperature) vary, so do the times. **To most ocean swimmers, only one thing defines a successful ocean swim – how you feel when it ends.**

While the factors contributing to one's swim in a pool and the ocean differ, there just seem to be fewer worries with open water swims. Sure, you have to sight the buoys on the course, or you may swim an unofficial or unending race; but, mostly it's about breathing, swimming straight, and having fun.

For Dieter, the essential element to a successful open water event is the fun. The social experience is easily observed at the gathering for the start - greeting friends and meeting newcomers, easing their anxieties, while expressing support for their effort to complete the distance.

One can certainly compare open water events in terms of organization, safety, awards, course marking and assorted registration swag, **but the "fun factor" is the added ingredient that makes the entire drive on the Garden State Parkway worth the trip.**

(continue on page 8)



Soaking up the sunshine after the Lavallette Ocean Swim

Front Row, left to right: Michael Ciolino, Susan Kirk, Bill Reichle, Mike Fanelli, Chris McGiffin

Back Row, left to right: Dieter Wunderlich, Brendan Gallagher, Curt Sawin, Dave Feldman, Jeff Jotz, Judy Ramirez, Greg Blessing

Meet Calendar: NJ

December 7-9 The 5th Annual Short Course Meters Holiday Classic & Colonies Zone Championships at Rutgers University, Piscataway, NJ

Please note schedule change for Saturday, December 8th:
8am warm-up,
9am start. Meet Entry
Deadline was
November 18, 2007



Meets Outside of NJ

January 1 - December 31

Go The Distance 2007 Fitness Event

Contact Mary Sweat at
gothedistance@swimoregon.org
More info: www.usms.org/fitness

January 1 - December 31

**Check-Off Challenge Fitness Event
Le Tour de Pool**

More info: www.usms.org/fitness

Championships

December 7-9 The 5th Annual Short Course Meters Holiday Classic & Colonies Zone Championships at Rutgers University, Piscataway, NJ

Please note schedule change for Saturday, December 8th: 8am warm-up, 9am start.
Meet Entry Deadline was November 18, 2007



**December 14-16
New England LMSC
Short Course Meters
Championship, Boston
University, Boston, MA**

www.greatbaymasters.org
Entries were due November 23

April 15-25, 2008 FINA World Masters Championships, Perth, Australia

www.2008finamasters.org. See Qualifying Times at www.2008finamasters.org/index.php?id=1200

April 24-27, 2008 (tentative) USMS SCY National Championships, University of Texas, Austin, Texas

May 15-Sept 15, 2008 USMS 5km and 10km Postal Championships

Contact Susan Ingraham at
aquatex101@aol.com or 210-493-0388

May 15-18, 2008 YMCA Masters National Championships, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida
More info at www.ymcaswimminganddiving.org

June 21, 2008 USMS 6+ Mile Open Water Championships (10 km), Hartwell Lake, Clemson, South Carolina

Contact Jacque Grossman at jelg@innova.net or 864-646-8836

June 28, 2008 USMS 1 Mile Open Water Championships, Long Island Sound, Madison, Connecticut

Contact Jen Lyman coachlyman@hotmail.com or 203-464-6903; Allison Pelliccio alli@allisonp.com; Tom Savoca tsavoca@newsvues.com or 203-318-0182

July 12, 2008 USMS 2-Mile Cable Championships, Chris Greene Lake, Charlottesville, Virginia

Contact Dave Holland HenryDaFif@aol.com or 804-282-6224

August 3, 2008 USMS 3-6 Mile Open Water Championships (5 km), Elk Lake, Bend, Oregon

Contact Pam Himstreet 541-385-7770 or himstreet@bendbroadband.com; Bob Bruce at 541-317-4851 or coachbob@bendbroadband.com

August 14-17, 2008 USMS LCM National Championships, Mt. Hood Community College, Mt. Hood, Oregon

Contact Dennis Baker at 503-679-4601 or bakeswims@yahoo.com

August 23, 2008 USMS 1-3 Mile Open Water Championships (2.4 miles), Lake Monona, Madison, Wisconsin

Contact Dick Pitman at 608-770-2307
dickpitman@hotmail.com

September 15 - November 15, 2008 USMS 3000/6000 Yard Postal Championships

Contact Mark Gill at markgill@usms.org or 480-874-7112

October 10-17, 2009 World Masters Games, Sydney Olympic Park Aquatic Center, Sydney, Australia

More information: www.2009worldmasters.com and www.2009worldmasters.com/Swimming

December 5-7, 2008 Colonies Zone Short Course Meters Championships at Rutgers University, Piscataway, NJ

Contact Alessandra Lyn-Lupu at 732-445-0457 or alill12@rci.rutgers.edu or swmeet@rci.rutgers.edu

(“Open Water...” continued)

Who better to survey than someone who, at 70, completed 12 of the almost 20 ocean swim events held along the NJ Shore area. Dieter Wunderlich knows the measure of open water swimming enjoyment more than most. Most weeks, he shows up for at least three pool workouts to swim with the Berkeley Masters Club at Berkeley Aquatic Club, just to keep up his conditioning. **While he enjoys the occasional pool meet event, his teammates know where he is on the summer weekends – his “other” pool.** Yes, folks the Atlantic Ocean is at our doorstep. So, bring a friend, family member or spouse, and take in the sights, the sounds, and the fun that Mother Nature offers along the NJ Shore. When you go, remind yourself to ask for tips from Dieter and extend your thanks to all of the volunteers and lifeguard staffs who make these events happen.

Summer 2007 Ocean Swim Top Ten Observations by Dieter

TOP TEN 10 REASONS TO SWIM IN NEW YORK CITY

1. If you are a computer geek and you can navigate through the pre-registration maze – GO
2. If you are prepared to register months ahead to meet your \$25.00 fee budget – GO
3. If you want to commit yourself for a rain or shine race – GO
4. If you want to triple your travel/parking budget – GO
5. If you want to wear a T-shirt and bag with a NYC logo – GO
6. If you want to wear a New York participating medal – GO
7. If you want to get a nice breakfast – GO
8. If you want to swim from a floating start – GO
9. If you can swim fast enough to finish 11th place, to still get a plaque – GO
10. If you have not found the love of your life on the Jersey shore yet – GO

TOP TEN 10 REASONS TO SWIM IN NEW JERSEY

- 
1. Simple, efficient pre- and on-site registration
 2. Chance to conquer the waves at the start
 3. Good course markings, swim Lavallette and Seaside Heights
 4. Good finishing markers, swim Sea Bright and Barnegat Light
 5. Good breakfast, swim Long Branch, Manasquan, Monmouth and Seaside Park
 6. Good barbecue, music, and “Jaws” on film, swim Seaside Heights
 7. Delicious pizza and goodies, swim Sea Bright
 8. Memorable medals for all age groups swim Barnegat Light, Lavallette, Long Branch (except why no awards for the 80-89 age group?), Manasquan, and Seaside Park
 9. Best T-shirt theme & color combination, swim Barnegat Light, Bradley Beach, Lavallette, Long Branch, Atlantic City and Manasquan
 10. Best overall beach summer spirit, swim Long Branch, Manasquan, Monmouth, Sea Bright, Seaside Heights, and Seaside Park

Rated event sites: Bradley Beach (7/7), Avon by the Sea (7/14), Spring Lake (7/21), Sea Bright (7/28), Monmouth Beach (8/5), Seaside Heights (8/5), Seaside Park (8/11), Lavallette (8/18), Long Branch (8/19), Barnegat Light (8/25), Manasquan (8/26), Atlantic City (9/7).



Stretching Won't Prevent Sore Muscles Researchers Say Stretching Before or After Exercise Has Little or No Effect on Soreness

By Kathleen Doheny, WebMD Medical News

Oct. 17, 2007 -- Stretching before or after vigorous exercise won't spare you the agony of sore muscles, according to a new review.

Researchers from the University of Sydney in Australia arrived at the conclusion after reviewing the results of 10 published studies.

The review "showed very clear results that stretching is not effective in avoiding muscle soreness," says study researcher Marcos de Noronha, a PhD candidate at the university. The study is published in the latest issue of *The Cochrane Database of Systemic Reviews*.

Debates about what stretching can or can't do have gone on for years; advocates claim it not only reduces muscle soreness but also improves performance and reduces injury risk.

The Australian researchers focused only on the ability of stretching to reduce soreness. **And if your only reason to stretch is to avoid soreness, de Noronha says the review proves "you don't need to go through the hassle because it does not actually work."**

"However, if you stretch because you feel good when you do so, then go for it since there is no evidence that stretching before or after exercise is harmful," he says.

While de Noronha says this review should lay to rest the long-running debate about the effect of stretching the major muscle groups on muscle soreness, another expert tells WebMD he still believes it works and that the debate is not over yet.

A Closer Look at the Study

The Sydney researchers focused on what is known as delayed-onset muscle soreness, which usually occurs within the first day after extensive exercise and then peaks at about 48 hours. Nine of the studies were done in laboratory settings in which participants came in and exercised and then reported how sore they were later; one study looked at football players who reported their soreness after playing.

Three studies zeroed in on pre-exercise stretching, while the others assessed post-exercise stretching. Six studies compared participants assigned randomly to either stretch or not.

Participants stretched for 40 seconds to 600 seconds per session. De Noronha and researcher Robert Herbert, PhD, a senior research fellow at the university, used a 100-point scale to assess stiffness after exercise.

Pre-exercise stretching reduced soreness one day after exercise by, on average, less than 0.5 on a 100-point scale. Post-exercise stretching reduced soreness a day later by 1 point. "Similar effects were evident between half a day and three days after exercise," the researchers write.

Second Opinions

Two experts who reviewed the study results for WebMD came to different conclusions.

IDEA Health and Fitness Reveals the 25 Most Significant Health Benefits of Physical Activity and Exercise

No. 1: Cardiovascular disease: Long-term participation in some form of cardiovascular exercise will lower risks of the leading health-related cause of mortality among men and women.

Nos. 2-4: Diabetes, insulin sensitivity and glucose metabolism: Regular aerobic exercise helps meaningfully increase insulin sensitivity and glucose metabolism

("Stretching..." continued)

"It makes perfect sense," says Michael Bracko, EdD, a consulting exercise physiologist in Calgary, Alberta, and a spokesman for the American College of Sports Medicine. He has long believed that stretching does not prevent soreness. "It's a really good review, and it's information we have known for some time."

Once the pain sets in, Bracko says, stretching might reduce the soreness temporarily if you stretch then. "But the painkilling effects only last 15-20 minutes," he says.

But another expert, Pedram Aslmand, DPM, a sports podiatrist in Long Beach, Calif., doesn't think the new review will end the debate on stretching and its effect on sore muscles. "It's difficult to control for the effects of stretching on soreness," he says. For instance, some of the study participants may have had structural abnormalities -- such as shortening of the calf muscles -- that resulted in soreness despite the stretching, skewing the results.

Advice: To Stretch or Not to Stretch?

While the benefits of stretching are debated, experts say that proper, gentle stretching may not do all that exercisers hope for, but it won't hurt. **Aslmand believes stretching can also help prevent injury and also can improve performance.**

Bracko found, in a recent review of studies, that those who stretch regularly may get some injury protection. For many athletes, he says, stretching has become more of a ritual than anything.

So if stretching won't quell those sore muscles, what might? "Do a little light exercise," Bracko suggests.

while resistance training and aerobics can play a strong role in the prevention of non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus.

No. 5: Hypertension (high blood pressure): Moderate intensity aerobic exercise, performed three-to-five times per week for 30-60 minutes per session, appears to be effective in reducing elevated blood pressure.

Nos. 6-8: Blood Triglycerides, HDL Cholesterol ("good" cholesterol) and LDL Cholesterol ("bad" cholesterol): Research shows that 15-20 miles per week of jogging, biking or brisk walking may decrease blood triglycerides while the same threshold of exercise has been shown to elevate HDL-C (the "good" cholesterol).

No. 9: Stroke: Statistics show that those who are moderately active have a 20% lower risk of stroke while those who are highly active have a 27 percent lower risk (Sacco, et al., 2006).

Nos. 10-13: Colon, Breast, Lung and Multiple Myeloma Cancers:

Physically active men and women have a 30-40 percent reduction in relative risk for colon cancer compared with their inactive counterparts. Although more research is needed, it appears physically active individuals have a lower risk of lung cancer (Lee, 2003). Meanwhile, patients of multiple myeloma cancers who walk three-to-five days per week for 15-to-30 minutes and do light resistance exercises have demonstrated an increased overall quality of life (Roberts-McComb, 2007).

No. 14: Osteoporosis: In order to preserve bone health during adulthood, physical activities that stimulate bone growth are recommended, including weight-bearing endurance activities three-to-five times per week and resistance exercise two-to-three times per week for a total of 30-to-60 minutes of exercise per day (Kohrt, et al., 2004).

Nos. 15-16: Musculoskeletal Health and Sarcopenia: Muscle mass, strength, power and endurance are essential contributing factors for ensuring musculoskeletal health and movement capabilities (Marcell, 2003).

Nos. 17-18: Body Composition and Obesity: The most favorable approach to effective weight loss includes committed cardiovascular exercise of up to 200-to-300

minutes of moderate-intensity activity accumulated over five-to-seven days per week (ACSM, 2006). Meanwhile, resistance training and circuit training have shown meaningful changes in body composition (Marx et al., 2006).

No. 19: Arthritis: Consistent exercise improves aerobic capacity, muscle strength, joint mobility, functional ability and mood without apparent increases to joint symptoms or diseases (Finckh, Iversen & Liang, 2003). High-impact exercise should be replaced with swimming and other water exercises, which are much safer on weight-bearing joints.

No. 20: Stress: Published investigations conclude that individuals with improved fitness levels are capable of managing stress more effectively than those who are less fit (Hassmen, Koivula & Uutela, 2000). Cardiovascular exercise appears to derive the most stress reduction benefits.

No. 21: Mood State: Cardiovascular and resistance exercise can positively affect various mood states, including tension, fatigue, anger and vigor in normal and clinical populations (Lane & Lovejoy, 2001; Fox, 1999).

No. 22: Depression: The antidepressant action is one of the most commonly accepted psychological benefits of exercise. Cardiovascular and resistance exercise seem to be equally beneficial in producing antidepressant effects (Brosse, et al., 2002).

No. 23: Anxiety: Most of the research in this area indicates that aerobic exercise is most beneficial in reducing anxiety, yet a few studies also show a slight decrease with resistance training and flexibility exercises (Scully, et al., 1998).

No. 24: Self-Esteem: Exercise also has a positive influence on self-esteem (Callaghan, 2004). Studies indicate that aerobic exercise may have a more pronounced impact than anaerobic activity, but there is little research currently on the correlation between resistance training and self-esteem.

No. 25: The "Weekend Warrior": A recent study (Lee and colleagues, 2003) focused on this subpopulation of exercisers who do only one or two bouts of exercise a week, perhaps because of time or choice. The study found that "weekend warriors" who had no other major risk factors (and expended at least 1,000 kilocalories in this sporadic exercise pattern) had a lower risk of dying prematurely than their sedentary counterparts.



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