

Leader TOOLS

Keeping participants
focused on positive
lifestyle choices

FEBRUARY 2016

Heart Health During Heart Month

February is American Heart Month so remind your class participants to take care of their heart with your health education topics.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Million Hearts (a national effort to prevent one million heart attacks and strokes in the US by 2017) are encouraging Americans to know their blood pressure. High blood pressure often shows no sign or symptoms, so it is important to have your blood pressure checked regularly.

For more
information,
visit the CDC
website

Teaching TIP: 2-MINUTES – TOO GOOD NOT TO DO!

By Susan Rappaport

Susan Rappaport, **NUYU REVOLUTION FITNESS STUDIO**, offers a less-is-more suggestion to boost health and wellness with a 2-minute plan that everyone can follow. You will notice how this simple plan complements the AEA Arthritis Foundation program with a gradual, progressive approach to total body wellness, making it a perfect teaching tip, especially for those participants just beginning an exercise program.

Personal struggles with obesity and diet offered Susan the inspiration for her fitness methods, and a newfound philosophy - Progress, Not Perfection - ignited a transformation that forever changed her life and continues to be a proven formula for success in the lives of her students. "My mission is to make people comfortable with fitness, not be intimidated by it," says Susan.

Here's How: Start with a plan to devote 10 minutes of your day to improving health:

- 2 minutes of focused breathing
- 2 minutes of range of motion and stretching
- 2 minutes of elevating heart rate
- 2 minutes of posture and alignment awareness
- 2 minutes of strengthening exercises

Every week, try to add 2 minutes to each area and in just one month you will be well on your way to a healthier, happier lifestyle. As Susan says, "This is TOO good not TO do!"

A special TOUCH

Submitted by Helen Tilden

A few minutes of extra planning can make your class very special and your students anticipating the next “special day.” Pick a day each month, or if you have extra time to plan, one day a week to be a special day. Give advance notice you want the participants to prepare, such as a t-shirt day or hat day.

Marvelous Monday

Start the week sharing what each person did over the weekend that was marvelous - went to a concert, attended child’s soccer game, etc. At the end of class, wish them a Terrific Tuesday and give a joint protection tip.

Terrific Tuesday

Laughter is good for the soul! Try to have a good laugh once a day and what better than a silly joke. Make Tuesday Joke Day and give your participants a chance to be on stage for a few minutes. Be sure to plan your own joke to send them on their way with a good laugh and a smile on their faces.

Wonderful Wednesday

Play “What a Wonderful World” by Louis Armstrong for the cool-down, or for the warm-up try a more upbeat version of it by Israel (Iz) Kamakawiwo’ole (both are available at iTunes.) Go to WWW.SONGLYRICS.COM for the lyrics and distribute so everyone can learn the words. Encourage the class to sing along and observe posture to ensure breathing is good throughout the song. You can choreograph moves to the lyrics - overhead for trees and clouds, trace an arc for the rainbow, rock a baby at those words in the song, etc. At the end of Armstrong’s version, emphasize the “oh yeah” with a deep breath in and out on the word “yeah” for relaxation.

Trivia Thursday

Compile a list of trivia for each holiday or month (see your AEA/AF Manual for ideas). Use the trivia questions in the education portion of your class or during an active rest. The states are always a popular trivia choice. Go to WWW.50STATES.COM and click on your state to find the state flag, bird, song and more. Memorize the facts and call out questions during your active rest period or print them out for homework... but don’t include the website or everyone will get every question correct!

FANTastic Friday

Games are always fun and a diversion from pain. Take the “fan” in fantastic and talk about the upcoming Friday night high school football game, Saturday college game, or Sunday professional game. Ask the participants to wear their team colors on Fantastic Friday. Another option is to take turns telling where you went to college, where a grandchild goes to college, or your favorite college or professional team. Your group not into sports? Friday is also known as TGIF (Thank Goodness It’s Friday) each person tells why they are glad it is Friday. Focus on a relaxing cool down to send them off for the weekend with a joint protection or energy conservation tip.

If you teach on Super Saturday or Hot Fudge Sunday, the Internet is a valuable resource for additional ideas. We would love to hear about your special days and activities. Send an email to JULIE@AEAWAVE.COM and your name might be in the next issue of Leader Tools with your suggestion!