

FitSmart JORGE CRUISE

Got arthritis? Exercise will help you control it

It used to be if you had arthritis, you stopped exercising. Studies now show:

- Exercise can decrease functional decline by as much as 32%.
- Obese people who lose as little as 15 pounds experience nearly 50% improvement in arthritis pain of the knees.
- Exercise helps control arthritis by strengthening muscles that support arthritic joints, increasing range of motion and reducing body weight.



"Currently, 21 million people have osteoarthritis, and that number is projected to jump to 30 million in the next few years," says Patience White, M.D., chief public health officer of the Arthritis Foundation. "Getting physically active for 30 minutes a day five times a week will help decrease pain."

The Arthritis Foundation website, arthritis.org, is a great resource. Check it out for a free brochure about arthritis and exercise, links to local chapters and where to find activities such as the foundation's aquatics program, and the *Take Control with Exercise* DVD, which has stretching, range of motion and strength exercises.

TravelSmart By EVERETT POTTER

Today, spas mean fitness



A decade ago, most destination spas focused on pampering and weight loss. But an increasing number now aim for wellness, stress relief and fitness. Here are four examples:

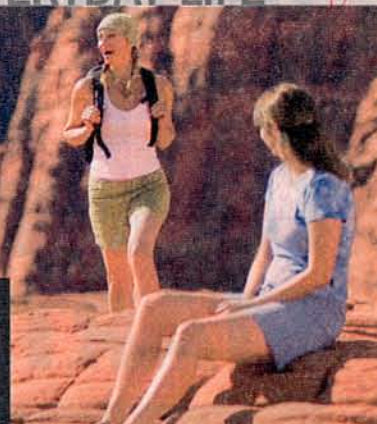
■ At Red Mountain Spa in St. George, Utah, each day begins with a choice of guided hikes on more than 30 different trails. Red Mountain also offers dozens of activities, from Pilates mat workouts to "New York City" ballet classes. Treatments include a "desert rain" massage and a "four hands" massage, which two therapists give simultaneously.

■ One of the most affordable destination spas is the Oaks at Ojai, near Ventura, Calif. Muscle conditioning, rollerblading and a pool workout

called Water Works are among the 16 different exercise classes that are offered every day. And a body composition analysis should make you feel smarter about your health.

■ The New Life Hiking Spa in Killington, Vt., also combines affordability with exercise. The spa, which operates from May through September out of the Inn of the Six Mountains, offers daily hikes, and the afternoon yoga or meditation classes can be followed by massage treatments. Cooking classes and wellness workshops also are available.

■ Miraval, Life in Balance is a



Hiking trails like this one at Red Mountain Spa get guests outdoors.

luxurious desert facility near Tucson that's said to be Oprah's favorite spa. But even if you don't spot her, try the rigorous workout known as Zen Boot Camp. Have lunch with a nutritionist, who can answer all your diet-related questions. Activities include mountain biking and horseback riding.

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ParentSmart ANN PLESHETTE MURPHY

Tutor toddlers with hugs

A surge in pricey tutoring programs for the pre-kindergarten set makes you wonder: Are they worth it?

"We know from decades of research that children learn best through their everyday experiences with the people they know, trust and love, not in structured environments where they are pressured to perform," says Matthew Melmed, executive director of Zero to Three, which promotes youngsters' well-being. He stresses the critical connection between a child's emotional and social development and his ability to learn.

TO BOOST LOVE OF LEARNING:

- Think fun, not flashcards.



Children learn best from people they trust.

Cuddles and hugs are just as important to your toddler's brain development as words on a page.

■ **Teach as you play.** At the playground, talk about "in and out," "up and down." Use the sandbox to introduce quantities and counting.

■ **Make music together.** Singing and dancing both build creativity and language skills.

EatSmart JEAN CARPER

Eating too much meat may cause colon cancer

Until recently, eating a high-fiber diet was thought to prevent colon cancer, but it has proved disappointing. Now the focus has shifted to "excessive meat consumption," says Jeffrey R. Prince of the American Institute for Cancer Research.

Possible villains in meat: heme iron, nitrates, nitrosamines and salt in processed meats, and heterocyclic amines in meats cooked at high heat. Also, high meat intake produces gut byproducts that are carcinogens.

Prince says the benefits of fiber aren't ruled out. Besides, high-fiber eaters are likely to eat less meat and vice versa.

Other colon cancer factors: obesity, a lack of folic acid and little exercise. **TV**



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