



# newsletter

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EXPERIENCE LIFE AT ITS BEST. STAY INSTEP FOR LIFE WITH HIM.

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## CREATION Health Connections: *Our Physical Activity and our Rest*

The R in C.R.E.A.T.I.O.N. stands for *Rest*. *Rest* empowers you to function at your best. Optimally, rest includes getting a good night's sleep and taking the time out to relax and rejuvenate during each day, on a weekly basis, and annually. *Rest* is a powerful antidote for everyday challenges of life. Participating in regular physical activity impacts our rest in very positive ways. Researchers have found definite differences between those who do not participate in physical activity and those who are physically fit. The fit individuals report that they fall asleep more rapidly, sleep better, and feel less tired during the day. Other studies have confirmed these findings, showing that those who exercise regularly do indeed spend more time in slow-wave sleep, which is the deepest most restorative kind of sleep. A Stanford University study included physi-

cally inactive older adults, one group exercised for 16 weeks and the other continue to be inactive. The researchers found that the physical activity led to improved sleep quality, longer sleep, and a shorter time to fall asleep. Another study of post-menopausal women found that those who were more physically active had less trouble falling asleep. It is important to note that heavy physical activity close to bedtime can have an adverse effect on sleep quality. During activity the body's muscles contract and relax and help the body rid itself from tension that accumulates from things such as sitting at a desk for extended amounts of time. Activity also helps us to be able to let go of stress. The mind is better able to relax during activity, especially when it is in both an invigorating and relaxing environment that includes things such as fresh air, sunshine and beautiful scenery. This time "away" is a great way to relax and focus our minds. On the other side of the coin, rest empowers activity by providing the vitality needed to physically work the body. *Rest* also empowers the natural results of healthy activity by providing fast and complete restoration from the physical strain of exercise. For example,

## happenings

- Last month the Northern California Conference held a number of regional meetings and the folks there were fired up and ready. Pedometers were on hand and churches were signing up to participate in this Division wide endeavor.
- Rob Thomas from La Sierra University, Lysa Hellie from Pacific Union College, and Harold Mayer from Southern University are gearing up to be part of InStep. The churches associated with these schools are also becoming part of the program.
- Dr. DeWitt Williams reports that the workers in the General Conference and North American Division had a very positive reaction to InStep for Life as they participated at the end of last year. Those participating realized many of the good benefits which come from the 10,000 steps a day.
- InStep will be present in various conferences: This month the NAD Ministries meetings are being held in Myrtle Beach. Later this month the Health Summit is once again meeting in Orlando, and the Education Department is meeting in Portland, Oregon in February. If there are other meetings you are attending, make sure to mention InStep for Life.
- The well received CHIP program will be holding their meetings in many places as churches make this program available to their communities. InStep for Life is now the exercise component for CHIP. Starting this month pedometers will be included in the registration kit.
- CAMP meetings are just around the corner. Be sure to let your conference know about InStep for Life and have it included as part of their presentations and as an integral part of the activities.

> I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year, "Give me a light that I may WALK bravely into the unknown." He said, "Put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you, better than light and safer than a known way."

> Oh, let me WALK with Thee my God, as Enoch WALKED in days of old, place Thou my trembling hand in Thine, and sweet communion with me hold; e'en though the path I may not see, yet Jesus, let me WALK with Thee.

> WALKING with Thee my God, WALKING with Thee, Yet from all abject fear, lovingly free; e'en as a friend with friend, cheered to the journey's end, WALKING with Thee.

words of  
INSPIRATION

during exercise, muscles experience micro-tears. During rest, muscles are repaired so they are stronger than before. The body is thereby re-invigorated for activity.

*Our Physical Activity and our Environment*

The E in C.R.E.A.T.I.O.N. stands for *Environment*. The environments that we surround ourselves with have the potential to greatly enhance our lives. Physical activity also has the potential to have a very positive effect on your environment. Think about this, when you are fit, you have more energy and mental focus and are able to be more efficient at getting tasks done. This can help free up time and energy to organize, improve, and maintain your environment. Physical and mental fitness can also provide the impetus needed to "go the extra mile" and do those extra

little things that make life so much more enjoyable; like putting finishing touches on a dish you're serving or a room you're decorating. And pursuing regular physical activity provides the perfect opportunity to improve your environment by getting out and enjoying the blessings of nature mentioned above; such as sunshine, fresh air and the beauty of the natural world. A healthy environment also has the potential to

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*"...our minds and bodies function best in a natural environment."*

positively impact our level of physical activity. Studies have investigated several factors associated with levels of physical activity, including environmental characteristics. The results suggest that enjoyable scenery and the presence of hills can increase our physical activity. Spending time outside, in a natural environment is likely to result in an improved activity level. Another study found that participating in physical activity in a natural environment was better for the brain. Participants' performance on a memory and attention task did not improve for volunteers who took a walk down city streets, but it greatly improved following a walk in the park. After all, God did create a garden for the first man and woman to live in, so it follows that our minds and bodies are designed to function best in a natural environment.

The regular physical activity we engage in improves our sleep and leisure time, and regular rest in turn helps us get better results from our activity. Regular physical activity also helps us improve our environments, which in turn leads to improved physical activity. Won't you join us as we seek to reap the benefits of regular physical activity, rejuvenating rest, and healthy environment that nurtures our souls? In our next newsletter we will look at the exciting C.R.E.A.T.I.O.N. Health Connections of Activity, Trust and our Interpersonal Relationships.

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*Good success in your WALK throughout this New Year. May it be your best one yet, may it bring you health and happiness.*

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*InStep for Life is a North American Division Health Ministry Initiative*