Do You Need a Metabolic Makeover?

Submitted by Craig S. Stump, MD, PhD; Chief, Division of Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism; Associate Professor, Medicine, UA College of Medicine; Professor, Nutritional Sciences, UA College of Agriculture & Life Sciences

So you are “middle aged” now. You know you are slowing down, but you still feel pretty healthy. When you see your doctor for your annual checkup, however, she informs you that she has some concerns. Nothing serious right now, but you have gained another three pounds, and now weigh 30 pounds more than you did in high school! Your blood pressure is creeping up too, and your blood sugar is “borderline diabetes.” Your good cholesterol is, well, not so good. Written on your paperwork is the diagnosis “metabolic syndrome.” How bad can that be? She tells you that you need to make some changes or there will be trouble.

Metabolic syndrome is a collection of related abnormalities found in one in three U.S. adults. Its components are increased waist circumference, elevated blood sugar, above-normal blood pressure, and/or blood lipid imbalances such that there is too much circulating fat (triglycerides) and too little of the protective good cholesterol called HDL.

Individually these abnormalities may not worry your doctor, but a combination of three or more will. They should get your attention as well, because metabolic syndrome doubles the risk for cardiovascular diseases, such as heart attack and stroke, and is a forerunner to Type 2 diabetes and its many complications. It is also associated with colon and breast cancer, plus other malignancies.

The good news, though, is that metabolic syndrome can be reversed, often without medication. The challenge is that doing so requires an enduring commitment to improving your diet and physical activity. To reverse the slide into metabolic syndrome, stay away from processed carbohydrates such as sugar and starchy white foods (pasta, white bread), and eat more vegetables, fruits, nuts, beans, eggs, and leaner meats, while not exceeding your daily caloric requirement.

In terms of physical activity, since you are trying to stimulate the metabolism of your lean tissues, daily activity is best. Moderate intensity activities such as brisk walking are desirable, but start out slow and work up to 30 minutes a day. You will receive even more benefit if you can achieve 60 minutes a day. Finally, get out of your chair, away from your television or computer, for a few minutes every hour to rouse your muscles. Yes, metabolic syndrome is too common, but its remedy is really common sense.

UA Life & Work Connections Employee Wellness is offering a new screening for UA employees eligible for full benefits. The free screening includes tests for the five factors evaluated for metabolic syndrome: blood pressure, waist circumference, fasting blood sugar, fasting triglycerides, and high-density lipoprotein (good cholesterol).

For information and to schedule your metabolic screening, consult the Life & Work Connections website. The screening takes 15 minutes and includes a brief consultation with a registered dietitian nutritionist.
NEW! Metabolic Syndrome Screening  
Registration required. Please register online at lifework.arizona.edu/wws/metabolic_screenings_worksite_wellness.

Life & Work Connections Employee Wellness is offering a new screening free for UA employees eligible for full benefits. The screening includes tests for the five factors evaluated for metabolic syndrome: blood pressure, waist circumference, fasting blood glucose, fasting triglycerides, and high-density lipoprotein (good cholesterol). These screening tests also fulfill requirements for the Health Impact Program. Consult the LWC website for more information.

Individual Employee Health Screenings  
Registration required. Please register online at lifework.arizona.edu/wws/health_screenings_worksite_wellness.

This program is for employees eligible for full benefits. The screening includes blood pressure, total cholesterol and HDL, body composition, cardiac endurance step test; nutrition, fitness, and resilience consultation. If you are concerned about your risk for diabetes, you may also have the A1c diabetes screening for a $10 charge. This screening measures your long-term glucose levels (A1c). Neither blood test requires that you fast.

Department Screening  
We will come to your department for groups of 12 or more, assess blood pressure, total cholesterol/HDL, and body composition at your location. Please call 626-4760 to schedule a department screening or for more information.

ADOA Health Impact Program (HIP)  
The state of Arizona Health Impact Program (HIP) will begin January 4, 2016. Life & Work Connections’ health screenings, metabolic screenings, presentations, fitness classes, and nutrition/fitness consultations are some of the activities that fulfill the state of Arizona requirements as HIP activities. Consult the LWC website for details regarding enrollment, activities, and incentives.

Maricopa County Employee Wellness  
UA Life & Work Connections offers work/life and employee wellness programming every month at the Phoenix Biomedical Campus. Check lifework.arizona.edu/wws/phoenix_campus for the schedule. Contact Jodi Charvoz, Registered Dietitian Nutritionist and ACE Personal Trainer, to schedule a nutrition or fitness consultation at jcharvoz@email.arizona.edu.

Walks with Campus Leaders  
Take 20 minutes for fresh air, a lively walk, and good company! Join campus leaders and Life & Work Connections for fun noon time walks around campus. Please visit lifework.arizona.edu/wws/walks_with_campus_leaders for locations, dates, and honored leaders.

Walk Across Arizona!  
Join in on a UA tradition! UA Cooperative Extension and Life & Work Connections invite you to join in a 6-week health-promoting program, emphasizing physical activity and improved food choices. Gather your colleagues and friends, choose a captain, form a team of 2 to 10 people. Plan on attending the introductory meeting and captain’s meeting TBA on our LWC website: lifework.arizona.edu/wws/walkacrossarizona.

Resistance Bands for Strength Classes  
Wednesdays: Student Union, Presidio Room (4th floor), noon to 12:40 p.m.

Wednesdays: University Services Building (USB 216), 12:30 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.

lifework.arizona.edu/wws/strength_training

Weight Check Dates  
Want to keep yourself accountable by a weight check, a quick chat with a registered dietitian nutritionist, and a helpful handout? Stop by the Student Union from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., or the UA Life & Work Connections office from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Visit lifework.arizona.edu/wws/availableclasses/weight_challenges for updates, times, and room location.

Tai Chi for Health  
Tai Chi is a mind/body activity known for its health benefits, including stress reduction, balance, and joint pain improvement. UA Life & Work Connections offers free Tai Chi for Health and Tai Chi for Energy classes. Registration is required. Check lifework.arizona.edu/wws/classes/taichi for the current class schedule.

Guided Potlucks  
Here’s a new way to liven up your departmental meetings! For details, please check LWC’s website or email Christy at cwilson4@email.arizona.edu.

Conversations and Support  
Free, voluntary, and confidential consultations, informal assessment, referral, or brief problem-solving support. Employees can be seen for any reason, including alcohol, substance abuse, stress management, parenting, relationship, depression, anxiety, and more. Call 621-2493 to schedule with Susan Pickering, MEd, LPC, or Dave Swihart, MC, LPC.

Supervisor Consultation  
Call 621-2493 to set up appointment with Darci Thompson, MSW, LCSW, SPHR regarding individual and work group issues. For more information see our Supervisors & Managers FAQs.

Child Care and Family Resources  
For information on the Child Care Voucher and Sick Child and Emergency/Back-Up Care Programs, please call Kim Peters at 621-4365. Visit lifework.arizona.edu for forms, guidelines, and detailed information.

For a personalized phone or in-person consultation on lactation, changing table, infant/toddler, preschool, or school-age care resources, please call Caryl Jung, MS, at 621-9870.

Elder Care and Life Cycle Resources  
Call Caryl Jung, MS, at 621-9870 to request a personalized phone or in-person consultation to discuss area and national elder care and family caregiving referrals.

Nutrition/Fitness Coaching  
Call Jodi Charvoz, MEd, RDN, ACE, at 626-4760 for more information or to schedule an appointment.

Work/Life Integration  
Learn about the University’s guide on flexible work arrangements, related workplace and workforce issues, and strategies for coordinating work/life matters, by calling Caryl Jung, MS, at 621-9870.

Wellness in Action  
Stories can encourage, motivate, and keep us on track. We recognize UA faculty and staff who practice Wellness in Action — the positive choices we make for healthy living. Want to share your story? Email Christy Wilson, BS, RDN, at cwilson4@email.arizona.edu.
Stand up for yourself

Here’s a really simple way to help your overall health: Just stand more.

In today’s world, the majority of people sit — a lot — every day. The American Medical Association (AMA) has stated that sitting for extended periods of time can be bad for personal health.

The remedy: standing — while you work at a desk, talk on the phone, or do any number of daily activities. Standing is like walking: It can increase energy, burn extra calories, tone muscles, improve posture, increase blood flow, and boost metabolism.

To calculate how much time you’re sitting every day, go to Jan.HopeHealth.com/sitting.

Source: JustStand.org

Curb colds with exercise? Maybe.

Physical fitness may cut down on how often you get a cold and how bad it is, according to one study.

A survey of 1,000 people showed:

- The number of days with cold symptoms among those who said they were physically active on five or more days a week and felt fit was almost half (43% to 46% less) that of those who exercised on only one day or no days a week.

- The severity of symptoms fell by 41% among those who felt the fittest and by 31% among those who were the most active.

Exercising may cause a temporary rise in immune system cells circulating around the body, the researchers suggested. Although levels may fall back within a few hours, each boost may help strengthen defenses against infections, such as the common cold.

Source: British Medical Journal
**Is radon on your radar screen?**

Most people never think about a naturally occurring radioactive gas called radon, which is often found in buildings, including homes. That's because you can't smell or see radon. Why should you care? Radon is the second-leading cause of lung cancer after smoking. To learn more about radon and getting your home tested, go to [Jan.HopeHealth.com/radon](http://Jan.HopeHealth.com/radon).

**Take the ‘more is better’ approach to following behind vehicles**

How much distance should you leave between your car and the one in front of you? It may be more than you think in bad weather. Experts advise that you increase the “three second rule” to at least eight or 10 seconds when driving on slippery roads. For more on driving safety, go to [Jan.HopeHealth.com/driving](http://Jan.HopeHealth.com/driving).

**Want to be a life saver? Donate blood**

Donating blood doesn’t take long. The actual blood donation typically takes 10 to 12 minutes. The entire process, from the time you arrive until the time you leave (including the juice and cookies/crackers afterward), takes about an hour and 15 minutes.

You don’t have to wait for a special blood drive to donate. You can give any time. For more information, go to [Jan.HopeHealth.com/blood](http://Jan.HopeHealth.com/blood).

If you want to create your own virtual blood drive to honor a special occasion or person and want to get others involved, check out [Jan.HopeHealth.com/blooddrive](http://Jan.HopeHealth.com/blooddrive).

**Did you know...**

1 pint of blood can save up to 3 lives

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*Source: American Red Cross*

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“Never go to a doctor whose office plants have died.”

— Erma Bombeck

**Small Changes, Big Difference**

**ACT** like you want to change

Although some health conditions may be out of your control, you can do things to improve many issues — one step at a time.

*Take the ACT approach. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy focuses on accepting your current reality (your condition) and committing to changing it. ACT teaches you to:*

- Accept the health condition and your feelings about it without judging them as good or bad. In other words, own it. “I smoke, and I am tired of not feeling as healthy as I would like as a result.”
- Commit to goals addressing the health condition. “I am going to feel better and enjoy life more by not smoking.”
- Take action toward achieving those goals. “I have replaced my smoking habit with health-promoting activities/distractions, such as taking walks and reading more.”

*Source: “Everyday Healing: Stand Up, Take Charge, and Get Your Health Back...ONE DAY AT A TIME,” by Janette Hillis-Jaffe*
No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.
— Aesop

21 days can change your life for the better
Small, consistent actions over 21 days can create a significant, positive impact in your personal life, according to the organization KindSpring. Involve others and the impact ripples out even further. To create or join an existing challenge focused on kindness, mindfulness, gratitude, or your eco-footprint, go to Jan.HopeHealth.com/21days.

See page 8 — Stock Your ToolBox: See how you can link to Cool Tools & Resources to learn more about the topics in this issue!

Prevent brain drain by teasing it
Brain teasers and riddles can help you to think in ways that you otherwise might not. As a result, you may become more creative and/or gain new perspectives. Keep those neurons fired up with regular workouts. For some cerebral exercises, go to Jan.HopeHealth.com/brain.

‘Pay it forward’ pays off... and then some
Giving just a little in the name of kindness to someone or something else — whether in the form of time, talents, or treasures (money) — can multiply and impact more people and efforts than your initial contribution.

According to one study, researchers showed “paying it forward” is contagious and spreads from person to person to person. What’s more, the money the initial person gave was ultimately tripled by others who were (directly or indirectly) influenced to give more.

To learn more about spreading kindness, go to Jan.HopeHealth.com/kindness.

Source: University of California, San Diego

The Whole You: Emotional/Mental Health

Hands-free is not risk-free
A National Safety Council poll showed that 80% of U.S. drivers surveyed believed hands-free cellphones are safer than using handheld.

However, more than 30 studies have shown that using hands-free systems offers drivers no safety benefit.

Even with both hands on the wheel and your eyes on the road, your mind is distracted from driving. Think about it: People have driven stick-shifts for decades. The issue is not about keeping two hands on the wheel, it’s about the mental distraction.

Drivers talking on cellphones can miss seeing up to 50% of their driving environments, including pedestrians and red lights. Drivers look, but they don’t see, a phenomenon known as “inattention blindness,” which is similar to tunnel vision.


Small Changes, Big Difference
I look at managing my money as if it were a part-time job. The time you spend monitoring your finances will pay off. You can make real money by cutting expenses and earning more interest on savings and investments. I’d challenge you to find a part-time job where you could potentially earn as much money for just an hour or two of your time.

— Laura D. Adams

Figure out what your emergency fund needs to be

Most money experts talk about having at least three to six months of liquid/cash assets set aside in case of a job loss, medical emergency, short-term disability, etc. Go to Jan.HopeHealth.com/calculator to determine what your safety cushion should be.

Do your homework to ace hiring a financial planner

Not all personal money experts are the same. To make sure you’re getting the right advisor, research and ask the right questions. For a checklist of considerations, go to Jan.HopeHealth.com/advisor.

A money mind game: Use cash to spend less

Cash discourages spending, and credit or gift cards encourage it, according to a review of four studies. The more transparent the payment method, the greater the dislike to spend, or the higher the “pain of paying,” researchers noted. Cash is viewed as the most transparent payment form.

To use a cash system:

• Determine a realistic, but financially responsible, amount of money for your wants — meals out, entertainment, clothing, etc. — for a week or month.
• Withdraw that amount of cash from your bank account and only that amount.
• When the money runs out, your discretionary spending for that period of time stops.

Sources: American Psychological Association; NASDAQ

Want to help pay for your kiddos’ college? Don’t wait to start saving until they’re in high school.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, the average annual cost of public colleges and universities increased 6.5% each year over the last decade.

That means by 2030, annual public tuition will be $44,047. The total cost for a four-year degree will be more than $176,000.

When saving for college, compound interest can really save you. However, the longer you wait to start saving, the less interest you will accumulate and the more you will have to save. Check out a college savings calculator at Jan.HopeHealth.com/college to find out what you may want to be squirreling away now. You may also want to check into 529 college savings plans.

Learn more about FiscalFitness: at Jan.HopeHealth.com and start saving.
What’s Trending Now:
Find a reason to celebrate every day

Each day of the year has at least a few observances you can recognize, chuckle at, and/or use as an excuse to have some fun or do something positive and impactful, even in a small way. Here are some of the recognized days in January...

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<td>Take the Stairs Day</td>
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<td>Cut Your Energy Costs Day</td>
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<td>International Thank-You Day</td>
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<td>Clean Off Your Desk Day</td>
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<td>Dress Up Your Pet Day</td>
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<td>Answer Your Cat’s Question Day</td>
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<td>Measure Your Feet Day</td>
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<td>Compliment Day</td>
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<td>Opposite Day</td>
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<td>Bubble Wrap Appreciation Day</td>
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<td>Punch the Clock Day</td>
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<td>Fun at Work Day</td>
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<td>Puzzle Day</td>
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<td>Croissant Day</td>
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Small Changes, Big Difference

The cheese-covered pie is a popular go-to meal and snack, but you may want to watch how often you eat it.

Source: Pediatrics

Pay attention to how much pizza you eat

It’s fine to have pizza now and again, just maybe not as a staple in your daily diet.

One study showed that on the days kids eat pizza, they likely take in more calories, fat, and sodium than on other days. Although the investigation looked specifically at children, the same may be true for adults, too.

The study found:
• On the days children ate pizza, they consumed 84 more calories, 3 grams more saturated fat, and 134 milligrams more sodium than average.
• Teens took in an extra 230 calories, 5 grams saturated fat, and 484 milligrams sodium on pizza days.

See even more of What’s Trending Now at Jan.HopeHealth.com.
A one-minute video on making comfort foods healthier
Learn a simple three-step strategy so you can enjoy all those yummy, filling favorites without feeling guilty about them.

A one-minute video on better understanding your thyroid gland
Discover what it does, how to identify signs that something may be off, and when you should get it checked with your healthcare provider.

Ideas for what to have on hand: Shopping list for a healthy, well-stocked pantry
Start the year off right by adding key nutritious staples to your shelves at home. Download, print, and take the list along with you on your next grocery-shopping trip.

HOPE Health Info: Until next issue
The annual ritual of creating New Year’s resolutions dates back to 153 B.C. And, for as long as yearly resolutions have been around, we’ve been breaking them.

If you didn’t make a resolution this year, that’s OK. If you did make one, that is fine, too. But, if you end up not sticking to your promise, don’t beat yourself up. You’re not alone. Many different groups survey about New Year’s resolutions, and most of these surveys reveal that the majority of people give up on their goals — usually within the first few weeks. A main sabotage is setting unrealistic goals and getting discouraged when results don’t happen fast enough.

Instead of making major resolutions just because of some date on the calendar, try to make confident choices based on what really matters to you — regardless of what time of year it happens to be.

Until next issue, focus on making small, easy, health-promoting changes here and there. Before you know it, those changes will make a big difference.