

Keeping Fit

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Valerie Gaul (biting into apple) and Terry Romain (centre) of the Diet Centre recommend eating lots of fruit while dieting. Other diet counsellors at the Markham Main St. centre are (seated) Beverley Feggi and Isabella Greig.

— Bruce Etheridge

Balanced diet is key to weight loss

By BRUCE ETHERIDGE
Regardless the amount of exercise one does, if calorie intake exceeds the amount being burned off, weight is going to be gained. That's why diet is so important when trying to slim down.

But it's a delicate balance — losing weight without sacrificing nutrition — that dieters have to strive for.

Terry Romain and Valerie Gaul of the Diet Center in Markham believe that the most effective and safest way to loose weight is through a balanced diet.

"The secret is to get into a healthy lifestyle and eat good food," Mrs. Romain says.

They recommend a basic low fat/low sugar diet that includes many fruits, virtually an "unli-

imited number of vegetables" and seven to nine ounces of protein each day.

A key to successful dieting is to break it down into short and long term goals, Mrs. Gaul says. If, for example, a person's goal is to get down to 150 lbs. from 180 lbs. they first aim for the 170s then 169 lbs. and so on.

Neither advocates fad or fast reducing diets as a way to diet successfully. They recommend people try to change their eating habits so weight gaining won't be a habitual problem.

The women outlined a series number of helpful hints for those wishing to shed unwanted pounds.

• Drink at least eight eight-ounce glasses of water each day. As well as flushing toxins and providing

nutrients, water is very filling. "It also helps clear up the skin," Mrs. Romain adds.

• Refrain from eating after 8 p.m. The metabolic rate slows down at night as does physical activity and those calories are less likely to be burned off. "The evening is the worst time to eat," says Mrs. Gaul.

• Bake or broil food don't fry it. "Also remove the skin from chicken and fat from meats prior to cooking," Mrs. Gaul says. "Anything that the body can't use goes to fat, including protein."

• Get plenty of fibre in your diet through whole wheat and crusty breads — avoid enriched white breads.

• Eat lots of fruits and raw vegetables. That is also a recommendation found in the "the anti-cancer diet" as well, Mrs. Romain points out.

• Eat smaller, more frequent meals throughout the day. "Consuming a number of smaller meals more frequently keeps your blood sugar up during the day leaving you feeling less hungry," Mrs. Gaul says.

• Get into the practice of taking an emergency survival diet kit consisting of raw vegetables. "You can actually lose more weight eating a bigger salad than a smaller one," Mrs. Romain says. "It burns more calories to digest the food," she explains.

• Avoid refined sugar, coffee and tea. Caffeine in food and drinks acts as a depressant which can induce emotional eating.

• They also suggest exercising at least three times a week. Regular exercise raises the metabolic rate helping to burn off fat.

• Never stray off your diet more than two days in a row. If you give in to a craving for, say, cheesecake don't eat it unless it's really good, Mrs. Gaul says. "Because it's going straight to your hips."

Fringe benefits of fitness

By BRUCE ETHERIDGE
There are some surprising side benefits to exercise other than looking great, says Rosalie Campagna-Brown, director of the Markham Village Women's Club. "Not surprisingly, exercise can play a major role in reducing the risk of heart disease by improving the cardio-vascular system."

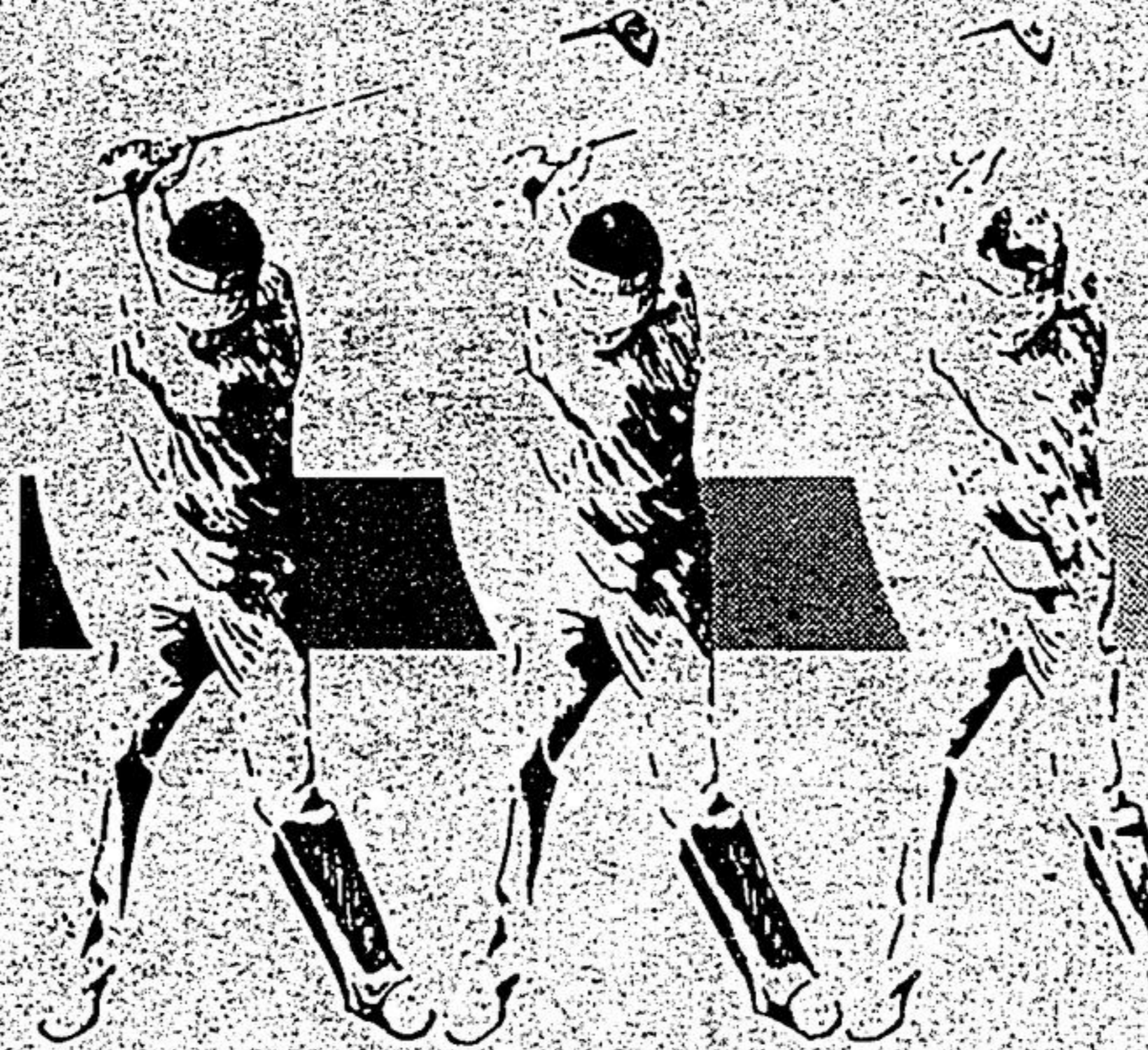
But some less obvious benefits include reducing high blood pressure, relieving arthritis and alleviating chronic back problems.

How does exercise help control blood pressure? "Exercise is a great stress reducer," points out Mrs. Campagna-Brown. "It also helps lower cholesterol levels in the blood," she adds.

Exercise improves ailments such as arthritis "by increasing circulation and blood flow" to the joints, Mrs. Campagna-Brown said. "Strengthening adjacent muscles, tendons and ligaments through exercise also aids in reducing arthritic woes."

Mrs. Campagna-Brown estimates that 70 per cent of the women who join her club "come in with bad backs." Women have a high incidence of back problems because of weak abdominal muscles — often due to childbearing.

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