

The Free Fitness Tips Newsletter - August 2008

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Hello everyone and welcome to the August 2008 **Free Fitness Tips Newsletter**. This month's blog posts covered the topic of [cancer](#). Whilst researching these articles I realised that there are a lot of unknown's regarding the various types of cancer BUT what was consistent is that a lot of cancer's can be largely prevented by improving your fitness levels through exercise and a healthy diet. Please read on for the full contents of this month's newsletter:

- [Featured Article!](#)
- [Free Fitness Tips Blog Updates!](#)
- [Featured Fitness Blog Post!](#)
- [Final Words!](#)

1) Featured Article

As I mentioned above, this month I have been writing a number of blog posts on cancer. There are a number of contenders for the featured post this month but I've decided to go with 'Colon Cancer Explained'...

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Colon Cancer Explained



Colon cancer (also known as bowel cancer or colorectal cancer) describes any type of cancer which affects the last section of the digestive system. This is usually the colon (large bowel) or the or rectum (back passage). According to Bowel Cancer UK it is “the third most common cancer in the UK affecting men and women”. It is also the second most common cause of cancer death in the UK affecting men and women accounting for over 16,000 fatalities each year.

Colon cancer usually develops from [polyps](#) (fleshy growths) in the intestine. Many of these polyps are benign (non-cancerous) but some are malignant (cancerous). If these malignant polyps are left untreated colon cancer can develop and over time these cancerous growths can then spread to other areas of the body.

Although we understand how colon cancer develops the exact causes are unknown. However, there are a number of associated risk factors:

- 1) AGE:** Your risk of contracting colon cancer increases as you age. 85% of colon cancer diagnoses occur in people over the age of 60 and cases of colon cancer in those younger than 50 are rare.
- 2) ALCOHOL:** A number of studies have looked at the links between colon cancer and alcohol and the results have been mixed. However, according to [About.com](#) the type of alcohol consumed plays a key role. Beer and spirits are both believed to increase your risk of developing colon cancer whilst drinking wine in moderation (one or two glasses a week) could lower your risk by up to 60%.
- 3) DIET:** According to [this study](#) from the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition (EPIC) diets that are high in red and processed meat increase the risk of colon

cancer. The study looked at 500,000 people across Europe for a period of 10 years and suggested that the risk for bowel cancer was a third higher in people who regularly ate more than two 80 gram portions of red or processed meat per day compared with those who ate less than one per week. The study also found that a low fibre diet increased the risk of colon cancer and that individuals who ate one or more portions of fish every other day were almost a third less likely to develop bowel cancer than those who ate fish less than once a week.

4) FAMILY HISTORY: If you have a family history of colon cancer it not only increases your risk of contracting the disease but it also increases your risk of developing it early. Furthermore, there a number of hereditary diseases which can increase your risk of getting colon cancer including [familial adenomatous polyposis](#) (a hereditary disease where multiple polyps form in the large intestine and can transform into colon cancer if left untreated) and [hereditary nonpolyposis colorectal cancer](#) (inherited mutations that reduce the self repair capacity of DNA, increasing the risk of cancer).

5) INFLAMMATORY BOWEL DISEASE: This refers to a number of inflammatory conditions which affect the large intestine. The two main forms are [Crohn's disease](#) (an autoimmune disease which affects the digestive tract) and ulcerative colitis (a condition where ulcers develop within the intestine).

6) SEDENTARY LIFESTYLE: According to [this article](#) from Cancer Research UK the risk of contracting colon cancer is halved in those who exercise regularly. Therefore, leading a sedentary lifestyle increases your risk for developing colon cancer.

7) SMOKING: Smokers are believed to be up to three times more likely to develop colon cancer than none smokers.

There are a number of symptoms associated with colon cancer. In the beginning the symptoms can be quite general but they often get worse as the malignant tumour grows. The symptoms include:

1) ABDOMINAL PAIN: Any prolonged abdominal pain should be treated with suspicion.

2) BLOODY STOOLS OR RECTAL BLEEDING: This is probably the most common symptom of colon cancer. If you notice any blood in your faeces or coming out of your anus you should go see your doctor immediately.

3) CHANGES IN YOUR BOWEL MOVEMENTS: This often happens in the form of constipation (when you have difficulty passing stools because they become hardened) or diarrhoea (when your stools become watery and it becomes difficult to control the frequency of your bowel movements). Any change in your bowel movement which lasts for more than a couple of weeks should be treated with suspicion.

4) UNEXPLAINED TIREDNESS

5) UNEXPLAINED WEIGHT LOSS

If you notice any of the above symptoms you should go see your doctor immediately. They will then be able to investigate further for colon cancer. The first stage of this investigation will usually involve your doctor performing a rectal exam with a gloved finger to feel for any lumps or swelling. If after this initial exam your doctor feels that you need further treatment he may pass you on to a hospital for a colonoscopy. This is a procedure where a fibre optic camera is passed through the anus via a flexible tube, allowing your doctor to perform a visual analysis.

If you are diagnosed with colon cancer it then needs to be staged before an appropriate treatment can be offered. One of the most common staging methods is Duke's classification which stages colon cancer in the following way:

1) DUKE A: When the cancer is in the lining of your colon or rectum.

2) DUKE B: When the cancer has grown into the muscle layer in the colon or rectum wall.

3) DUKE C: When the cancer has spread to at least one lymph node gland (glands which remove unwanted bacteria from your body).

4) DUKE D: When the cancer has spread to other parts of your body, usually your liver or lungs.

Colon cancer which is diagnosed in the early stages is much more treatable than colon cancer which is in the latter stages. Surgery is the most common treatment for colon cancer but chemotherapy and radiotherapy are also viable alternatives:

1) SURGERY: Surgery attempts to remove the cancerous cells from the colon. In most cases the bowel can be stitched back together following surgery but if not then a [colostomy](#) (a surgical procedure which attaches part of the colon to the abdominal wall). may have to be performed.

2) CHEMOTHERAPY: This involves using anti-cancer medications to eradicate cancerous cells. It can be used to treat colon cancer but is more commonly used to shrink the malignant tumour prior to surgery.

3) RADIOTHERAPY: This involves using high energy radiation beams to kill cancer cells and prevent them from spreading. Again this treatment is more commonly used to shrink malignant tumours before surgery.

Following your colon cancer treatment your doctor may then recommend continuing with chemotherapy or radiotherapy to reduce the risk of the cancer returning.

Although the above treatments may be required to treat your colon cancer, if you have not yet been diagnosed it makes sense to take preventative action so that you never have to go through the complications of surgery, chemotherapy or radiotherapy. There are a number of things you can do to reduce your risk of developing colon cancer:

1) EXERCISE REGULARLY: One of the risk factors for colon cancer is a sedentary lifestyle. By exercising regularly (30 minutes for at least 5 days a week) you can notably reduce your risk of contracting colon cancer.

2) IMPROVE YOUR DIET: As identified earlier in this article, a diet that is high in red or processed meat and low in fibre can increase your chances of developing colon cancer. Therefore, by cutting down on your intake of red and processed meat and getting plenty of fibre (from fruits, vegetables and whole grains) you can reduce your risk of contracting colon cancer. Moderating your alcohol intake is another dietary change you can make to further reduce your risk.

3) QUIT SMOKING: Smoking puts you at risk for a number of cancer types including colon cancer. By kicking the habit you can cut your risk considerably.

4) REGULAR SCREENING: The [NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Program](#) is being rolled out nationally and is expected to achieve nationwide coverage by 2009. The aim of the program is to detect bowel cancer at an early stage which will ensure more effective treatment. The program offers screening every two years for those aged between 60 and 69. As you age your risk of getting colon cancer increases so getting screened regularly is essential. The NHS Bowel

Cancer Screening Program provides you with the perfect opportunity to do just that.

Colon cancer is one of the most common types of cancer in the UK. However, it is highly treatable when caught early. I hope this article has helped you fully understand the risks associated with colon cancer and more importantly inspires you to take preventative action. By making a few positive lifestyle changes you can hopefully improve your fitness levels and live a life that is free from colon cancer.

Whilst every intention has been made to make this article accurate and informative, it is intended for general information only. Colon cancer is a very serious, life threatening condition and you should discuss any concerns, treatments or lifestyle changes fully with your doctor.

Sources:

- [Alcohol and Colon Cancer \(About\)](#)
- [Bowel Cancer Information \(Bowel Cancer UK\)](#)
- [Cancer of the Colon \(NHS Direct\)](#)
- [Colon Cancer Information \(Wikipedia\)](#)
- [Colon Information \(Wikipedia\)](#)
- [Colorectal \(Bowel\) Cancer Information \(BBC\)](#)
- [Colorectal Polyp Information \(Wikipedia\)](#)
- [Colostomy Information \(Wikipedia\)](#)
- [Crohn's Disease Information \(Wikipedia\)](#)
- [Diet and Colon Cancer Information \(BBC\)](#)
- [Familial Adenomatous Polyposis \(Wikipedia\)](#)
- [Hereditary Nonpolyposis Colorectal Cancer Information \(Wikipedia\)](#)
- [Inflammatory Bowel Disease Information \(Wikipedia\)](#)
- [NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Program Information \(NHS\)](#)
- [Protecting against Bowel Cancer \(Cancer Research UK\)](#)
- [Rectum Information \(Wikipedia\)](#)
- [Smoking and Bowel Cancer \(Cancer Backup\)](#)

2) Free Fitness Tips Blog Updates

This month the [cancer](#) section of the blog was created and updated with the following new articles:

- [*Colon Cancer Explained*](#) (this month's featured article)
- [*Breast Cancer Explained*](#)
- [*Mesothelioma Explained*](#)
- [*Small Cell Lung Cancer Explained*](#)
- [*Lung Cancer Explained*](#)
- [*Prostate Cancer Explained*](#)
- [*Ovarian Cancer Explained*](#)
- [*Skin Cancer Explained*](#)

3) Featured Fitness Blog Post

This month's featured fitness blog post is on the topic of the Olympics. Unless you have been living in a cardboard box for the last month or so then you will have noticed that the Olympics have been and gone. Coming out of this years Olympics there were two noticeable 'stars'; Michael Phelps (who got a record 8 gold medals at a single Olympic games and broke numerous world records in the field of swimming) and Usain Bolt (who broke both the world record and Olympic record in winning 100 meter and 200 meter gold medals). As a result there have been a number of fantastic blog posts on these two athletes which I have really

enjoyed reading. However, one article in particular really stood out to me. The article is entitled '[How Michael Phelps Managed To Break So Many Swimming World Records, One After Another](#)' and was written by Mun of [Mun Fitness Blog](#). I chose to feature this article because of the level of detail it contains on Phelps covering his diet, his training, his physique and more. Anyway, read on to learn everything you wanted to know about Michael Phelps...

How Michael Phelps Managed To Break So Many Swimming World Records, One After Another



Mun's article covers three main areas that are integral to Michael Phelps' success. In this newsletter I will discuss them in brief. You can read the fully detailed article at [Mun Fitness Blog](#):

- *Diet!*
- *Workout Routine!*
- *Other Success Factors!*

1) DIET

Michael Phelps pretty much eats what he wants when he wants and this equates to a whopping 10,000 to 12,000 calories per day. Whilst he doesn't eat really unhealthily he's not too bothered when he doesn't make the healthiest choice. One example is that he eats white bread in favour of whole wheat bread. But how does he get away with this? Quite simply he burns these calories away by swimming. With Phelps reported to swim at least 50 miles per week that's a serious calorie burning furnace he has going.

2) WORKOUT ROUTINE

Michael Phelps spends a lot of hours in the pool but he still has a specialised gym workout that enables him to perform as well as he does in the pool. This workout includes the specialist "wood chopper" exercise that is performed with a medicine ball and multiple other strength training and flexibility exercises.

3) OTHER SUCCESS FACTORS

Michael Phelps has worked very hard to get to where he is today. However, there are a number of other factors that differentiate Phelps from similar competitors and have no doubt further contributed to his success. These include:

- *A wingspan of almost 80 inches!*
- *A lower than normal blood lactate level allowing for quicker recovery from intense*

swimming!

All in all Michael Phelps is one impressive swimmer with many quoting him as "the greatest athlete of all time". I hope that this summary of Mun's article has inspired you to lead a fitter and healthier lifestyle. You can read Mun's full, in-depth post by [clicking here](#).

Source:

[How Michael Phelps Managed To Break So Many Swimming World Records, One After Another](#)

Well done to Mun for creating a post on Michael Phelps that really covers every angle. My summary only scratches the surface and I highly recommend you check out the [full post](#) at [Mun Fitness Blog](#). Apart from this post on Phelps, Mun has put together a highly impressive fitness blog that has been going for sometime now. I'm only a recent convert but I imagine I will be a regular reader for years to come.

4) Final Words

Another month, another topic covered at the [Free Fitness Tips](#) blog. My first plan of action next month is to round off the topic of cancer by explaining how I believe that leading a fitter and healthier lifestyle can really reduce your risk for a number of cancer types. After that I'm not too sure what I will write about. Let's wait and see what the month brings.

Thanks for reading :-)

Tom Parker (Owner and Creator of Free Fitness Tips)

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