MEMBER HIGHLIGHT: Henry Feldman

How long have you been a member at Be Well?

I joined in September of 2017, so it’s been eight months. Never belonged to a gym before that.

What motivated you to join the Tanger Be Well Center?

General stiffness was beginning to affect my everyday movements – bending, twisting, reaching. I hoped that a regular workout, guided by a knowledgeable trainer, would loosen me up and remove barriers to doing the things that I have to do and like to do.

What improvements have you seen in your daily life since joining Be Well?

Having the Tanger Be Well Center just down the street from my office makes it possible for me to conveniently put in three sessions per week. I take an hour off the end of the work day, once for a supervised workout and twice on my own. That last hour at my desk is never too productive, anyway, and this way the last hour is a plus. The physical activity is totally absorbing, if not exactly relaxing. I go home in a different state, sore, maybe, but unwound and released.

What have you learned?

It seems that after years of underuse, some muscles and joints will respond and strengthen promptly while others will rebel. I take it on faith that in the long term, the gains will outweigh the pains. My trainer, Leddy Gallagher, adapts the program to this changing picture and to my preferences and capacity, e.g., for certain machine routines over mat exercises. She has a keen sense of what to work on and how far to go in a given session – what devices, how much weight, how many repetitions – and together we learn what’s easy, what’s possible, what’s difficult, and what’s inadvisable. Leddy and all the staff are invariably good-humored, inventive, and responsive to my questions.

What other types of activities do you participate in?

I’m no athlete, never have been, but motion and physical capability are still important to me. I need strength and flexibility to take the stairs in a 3-story house, move heavy furniture, carry boxes of books, plant shrubs, hang pictures, tote large musical instruments, go hiking and biking, or lift and play ball with my grandchildren.

Be Well Survey
Thank you to everyone who gave invaluable feedback in the Tanger Be Well 2018 membership survey. Congratulations Glenn Merrill-Skoloff, winner of this year’s survey raffle!
Your Brain on Sugar

Feeling sluggish?
Have you been feeling sluggish, tired, or irritable? This might be related to the amount of sugar in your diet. The brain’s main source of energy is glucose (sugar). However, too much sugar can have a negative impact. Excess sugar intake has been linked to heightened cravings and an increased tolerance.

Rethink your snack choices.
Sugar is rapidly digested by the body and only supplies you with a quick burst of energy. Complex carbohydrates are a better snack choice because they provide longer-lasting energy. To maintain your energy level, try replacing your afternoon sugar-laden snack with something more substantial, like toast with natural peanut butter.

Sugar rush is due to a rapid (though brief) increase in blood sugar. The groggy feeling that most people experience after eating a sugar-filled meal or snack is due to the sugar crash which occurs when blood sugar drops rapidly.

Sugar affects brain chemicals, too!
For example, dopamine is released when sugar is consumed. Dopamine is responsible for regulating the brain’s reward response. It also aids in cognition, motivation, and behavior. Unfortunately, over time, as more sugar is consumed, more dopamine receptors are created. This creates a tolerance and more sugar is needed to achieve the same level of sugar rush. A similar reaction occurs with serotonin, the chemical which helps to stabilize mood.

What does the research say?
A study conducted in 2014 by Boutelle and colleagues researched the brain’s response to sugar-water in children. It found that those who were obese had a stronger response to the sugar-water than those at healthy weights. Another study conducted in 2015 by Harrell and colleagues researched the effects of a high-fructose diet in adolescent and adult rats. It found that this diet resulted in depressive and anxiety-like behavior, which was more noticeable in adolescent rats than in the adult animals.

Recommendations
Current dietary guidelines recommend consuming less than 10% of total calories from added sugars. In light of this finding:

- Make healthier food choices by checking food labels for sugar content.
- Swap your sugar-filled foods for whole grains, vegetables, and legumes!

References:
Harrell CS et al. High-fructose diet during perinatal development increases the brain’s response to sweet taste. J Physiol. 2015; 593(2):397-405
https://www.choosemyplate.gov/what-are-added-sugars
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