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INSIDE THIS ISSUE



- 1 How I Fell in Love With Personal Injury Law
- 2 High Quality Relationships Lower Blood Pressure

The Legal Dangers of Snow and Ice Falls
- 3 How to Support a Hospitalized Loved One

Strawberry Kissed Almond Butter Muffins
- 4 You're Building Muscle While You Rest

RELAX A LITTLE

Why Rest Days Are Good for You!

February is the month when many of us give up on New Year's resolutions. We lose motivation, or life simply gets in the way. If you find yourself sitting on the couch more than you did in January, when you may have been actively pursuing your fitness goals, consider this permission to sit a little while longer: Rest days are good for you! Here's why.

Your body *needs* to move. Exercise has many benefits, and from a survival standpoint, exercise and movement help your body perform daily functions effectively. But, as you may already know, that's not when your body gets stronger. It's actually on the days you choose to rest that your muscles and joints improve as a result of your exercise. Rest is when the body recovers and adapts to the stimulus of the stress the exercise imposed upon us.

Along with other physiological and even psychological effect, exercising creates tiny tears in your muscles. (Maybe that's why it burns so much!) In the regeneration process — aka your rest days — the muscle is built back stronger than it was before. That's why incorporating rest days into your workouts ensures you can climb up from 5 to 10 to 15 pounds and beyond for dumbbell curls or run more miles in a faster time than last week!



Beyond the improvement and fitness goals you have, rest days can also be essential to preventing injuries. Rest aids in ensuring that your body won't become overworked, and your muscles get the necessary respite they need. Fatigue won't set in as quickly, and you will find that you can do more as you properly incorporate rest days into your schedule.

Fitting rest days into your daily routine should be simple, easy and enjoyable, but it doesn't involve sitting on the couch for too long. You should always find a way to move at least once each day. If you want to try running, start out by running three days each week. On your "off" days, incorporate some yoga, go for a leisurely walk, or focus on some other less intense activity that you enjoy. This gives all parts of your anatomy and your mind a break from the healthy stress of running while you still get the benefits of movement. (Plus, on the days you run, you will get a break from yoga or weightlifting!)

It's okay if you haven't met your resolution goals just yet, but don't give up! Balancing activity and rest is part of the formula for lifetime wellness. Find a way to add more rest into your routine, and you just might be more invigorated than ever before.

How I Fell in Love With Personal Injury Law

Feb. 1 is National Get Up Day, a day created by U.S. Figure Skating to inspire people to be fearless in the face of falling. It is tremendous advice not only to figure skaters, who are likely used to the fear of falling down during practice or events, but it also applies to everyday life, including my own life and the lives of many of our clients, who may face anxiety or fear of "falling" in life.

For me personally, late in the year 2011, shortly after I had graduated law school, during the time period when I was waiting for my bar exam results, I was involved in a car accident where a car drove out of a parking lot into a street sign, into my car, and into a bush on the other side of the road. Shortly after the accident, an MRI taken of my neck revealed a nodule, which I was told may be cancer. After a biopsy, a surgery was scheduled. I was a bit down at that point — I had the uncertainty of cancer, surgery, and radiation treatment staring at me, and the job market was poor for new attorneys.

Ten years later, looking back at this difficult time, after having gone through it, I feel extremely lucky to have been diagnosed with cancer when I was. It was part of a larger journey that led me to my love for personal injury law.

How you ask? At the time, I was interning at a personal injury law firm. My job was to try to help get treatment updates, get medical records for clients, and send authorizations to insurance companies — a small part of a larger process. After having my fluke accident, I became part of the process myself. I understood what it meant to go to an "independent" medical exam, what it meant to drive to and wait at a doctor's office multiple times each week, get MRIs, have nerve tests, and feel physically off, all while dealing with the other normal stresses of life. This allowed me an additional perspective and empathy I would utilize throughout my career.

Back to the cancer and the theme of National Get Up Day. It was a very difficult seven-month process for me, but I knew I needed to "get up" every day, continue to submit job applications, and do my best to stay positive, even with all of the uncertainty surrounding me. I wasn't able to interview in person during my radiation time; however, I continued submitting applications, ignoring my fears of rejection.

After months of difficulty, and after a two-week quarantine period for radiation treatment, I got two pieces of good news in the same week:

I received clearance from my doctor to return to the public and also received my first ever full-time job offer to be an attorney following a telephone interview I had done the week before.

I'll be honest: I don't like saying that I'm a cancer survivor. Some cancer survivors go through years (even decades) of uncertainty, radiation, surgeries, and tests, while the hardest part of my treatments spanned only seven months, with routine follow-up and monitoring only in the 10 years that followed. I was, again, extremely lucky to have had it diagnosed when I did.

That first job I took ended up being in a different field of law. Injury law always called to me, however, after having had the internship and personal experience with an accident during the time I struggled with my cancer. In early 2013, a full-time personal injury opening became available and I pounced on it. Eight years later, I haven't looked back since.

Going through the process of my own case, and hearing stories from clients, I learned very early that insurance companies don't care about individual cases or people. To them, it is all a business. I have taken great pride in helping represent those who have struggled, like me, during a turbulent, uncertain time in their lives. I understand that sometimes a client simply needs to talk things out and work through anxieties about loss of work or their physical injuries, even if no solution is yet available.

Uncertainty, no matter how you look at it, is a real challenge. Staying positive in the face of fear, injury, or anxiety can be one of the most difficult things we do in our lives. How do we do it? Sometimes, the answer is as simple as continuing to move forward one day at a time and have the right people on your side. At Friedman & Simon, we'll fight for you while helping you to stay as positive as possible through whatever uncertainty an accident has caused. Happy February, and happy National Get Up Day. Do not be afraid of failure, or falling, and do not be afraid to fight to get back up after a setback.



-John G. Papadopoulos

LOVE BOOSTS YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM AND LIFESPAN



It doesn't take a scientist to tell us that a healthy, loving relationship can lessen our stress — but did you know it also boosts our immune system's response and could help us live longer? Multiple studies have shown that couples in happy, loving marriages tend to have lower blood pressure. Marriage itself isn't the key to a healthier life — the love is, researchers find.

How do researchers define a loving relationship? To put it simply, it depends on the couples' own opinion. Married couples with a high quality (that is, loving) relationship showed significantly lower ambulatory systolic blood pressure than singles. However, happily married couples and singles had lower blood pressure than people in low quality marriages. Which means, at least in terms of your health, it's much better to be single than unhappily married.

How does it help your blood pressure exactly? Well, when positive events occur, the hormones oxytocin and vasopressin interact with your dopamine reward system. Vasopressin in particular helps control blood pressure.

Of course, getting into a new relationship can be a little stressful! Cortisol, the stress hormone, initially rises when you fall in love. However, it quickly drops in a long-term, stable relationship. Those low cortisol levels sustained for a long period of time contribute to many health benefits.

But how does it improve your immune system? That's a bit of a mystery to researchers. So far, women in love have shown changes in their gene regulation of immune cells compared to women not in love. Some theorize that this is in order to prepare for pregnancy. Unfortunately, we still don't have conclusive research on whether men in love actually do better (than men not in love) at fighting off flu and other viruses.

High blood pressure is known as the "silent killer" since it has no symptoms, but it will steadily degrade your health over time, significantly increasing your risk of chronic conditions like heart disease. And while love is certainly not the only way to lower blood pressure, it's comforting to know our loved ones can boost our health for a longer, happier life. Happy Valentine's Day!

Walking in Sleet? Watch Your Feet!

The Physical (and Legal) Dangers of Snow and Ice Falls



Falling can be extremely dangerous no matter how old you are, because falling in the wrong way can cause a person trauma to the head or spine, a torn ligament, a broken bone, or other injuries, resulting in possible lifelong disability and difficulties.

One of the easiest ways people fall is by slipping on snow and ice (especially black ice). That's why property owners and others in possession of property generally have a responsibility to exercise "reasonable care" to maintain the safety of their areas.

Snow and ice falls can be tricky to prove in court. Why? In a previous edition, we talked about how a client tripped over an uneven sidewalk and how important pictures of the evidence were to her case. However, with snow and ice, there are often no pictures, as black ice is difficult to photograph, and an injured person is typically not in a position to take photographs immediately after a fall. By the time an injured person may have an opportunity to take a photograph in the coming days, or in the case of severe injuries, even weeks or months, it is a near certainty that the snow has melted or salt/sand has been applied.

Additionally, the law protects those in charge of property and snow removal companies — not every slip and fall on snow and ice will result in a successful negligence claim. For example, if there is a storm in progress, the law does not require a property owner or snow removal company to be constantly shoveling — and the law allows a grace period for the property owner or snow removal company to have time to properly remove the snow and ice after a storm.

If you do fall, how will you successfully prove it was due to the negligence of another party? At Friedman & Simon, we'll obtain weather reports, snow removal records, cleaning schedules, demand available footage be preserved, and do everything we can to find out who was responsible for properly clearing the sidewalk or roadway. If the negligence of another party leads to an injury, we will help to obtain a monetary recovery for our injured client to compensate for injuries caused due to the negligence of others.

With that said, it's incredibly important to be cautious when walking outdoors this winter. Wear shoes with heavy treading and a flat bottom so your entire foot makes contact with the ground for extra traction. Walk slowly. Look ahead before you step; if there's an icy patch, walk around it if you can. If you do happen to fall, or know someone who does, remember that at Friedman & Simon we've dealt with plenty of cases like this. Give us a call and let us help sort everything out.

SHOWING LOVE FROM AFAR

How to Support a Hospitalized Loved One

This Valentine's Day, some of us may be separated from loved ones due to the coronavirus pandemic — hopefully due to distance alone. But if your loved one is in the hospital, it can be an especially disorienting situation to navigate due to social distancing. How are you supposed to support them while visiting is limited or banned altogether? We have a couple of suggestions that could help you out!

First, with the patient's permission, create a CaringBridge account for them. For some people, Facebook can be too public these days to post everything about a medical recovery journey. With CaringBridge, the patient's closest friends and family can stay updated on their recovery and post affectionate responses of encouragement and support.

This can help your loved one feel far less alone, knowing a network of people supports them at a touch of a button. You can create an account for free at CaringBridge.org.

Second, talk to hospital staff about allowed gifts and try to bring comfort items for your loved one. Spending many hours in a new environment such as a hospital can be anxiety-inducing and uncomfortable. Comfort items, like their favorite blanket or book, can ease the burden a little bit.



However, there is a chance that the hospital won't allow certain items, especially food. That's why it's important to chat with the hospital staff and find out all the types of gifts they allow (and don't allow) so you can work with friends and family to provide everything they need.

Third, be patient and make sure to do plenty of self-care. Unfortunately, in nearly every way, you're not in control of your loved one's health. There's only so much you can do to help, but don't worry. Take care of yourself and make sure to do activities that keep you grounded and at peace. Don't exacerbate anxiety by leaning into self-destructive behavior — if you aren't healthy and happy, it's much harder to be available for the loved one in need.

One of the most loving things we can do for special people in our lives is to be there when they need us most. As you regularly call them and ensure they know they're in your thoughts, your loved one is sure to feel very loved and appreciated!

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SOLUTION

Strawberry Kissed Almond Butter Muffins



Inspired by AmbitiousKitchen.com

Ingredients

- 1 cup ripe bananas, mashed
- 3/4 cup natural creamy almond butter (can substitute creamy peanut butter)
- 2 large eggs
- 1/4 cup pure maple syrup (or honey)
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 cup oat flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/4 cup strawberry fruit spread, divided (we recommend Bonne Maman INTENSE)

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 F.
2. Line a 12-cup muffin tin with liners and spray with nonstick cooking spray.
3. In a large bowl, mix bananas, almond butter, eggs, maple syrup, and vanilla extract.
4. Stir in oat flour, baking powder, and salt until smooth.
5. Evenly divide batter into liners. Add 1 tsp strawberry fruit spread to the top of each muffin.
6. Use a butter knife to gently swirl the spread into the batter.
7. Bake for 22-27 minutes until a toothpick comes out clean.
8. Transfer muffins to wire rack to cool and enjoy!