

December Comfort Zone - Health and Wellness newsletter - This month's issue discusses preparing your family for emergencies, Christmas tree safety, shares symptoms of a heart attack, and discusses electrical safety during the holidays. Check these articles out and many more at

<http://www.uleth.ca/hr/wellness/newsletters>

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December Wellness & Recognition Newsletter



How Mike Mahon Stays Well at U of L



U of L "Partners for Life" Encourages the Gift of Blood Donation

With the Christmas season in full swing, do you want take some time to give the gift of life? As part of the U of L "Partners for Life," employees are being challenged to donate in December.



Upcoming Events

12/1
Managing Mental Health in the Workplace
8:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m.
AH100

In October we conducted interviews with some of the University's senior leaders to see how they stay well at U of L.

Mike Mahon, President & Vice-Chancellor

To read Mike's full interview, [go to the Wellness website.](#)

What physical activities do you do to stay well?

I stay active all year long. In the summer I kayak, stand up paddle board, golf, hike, and cycle and in the winter I like to cross country ski.

I also walk and workout at the gym doing cardio and weights.

I wear a Fitbit to track my daily steps and it's funny because my wife and I are a little bit competitive about our daily steps. I have a very active family and we are good influences on each other, parents to kids and vice versa.

The most common reason people give for not being active is that they don't have the time. As a senior leader you have a very busy schedule- how do make the time for wellness activities?

Donating blood can mean the difference between life and death for someone who needs blood. So schedule some time in the hustle of the season to give the gift of life!

In early 2015, an annual goal was set to get members of the University of Lethbridge community, their family and friends to donate at least 150 units of blood. For information on donating as part of this campaign please click here.



Staying Well at U of L Featured Employee

[Click Here for Details](#)

**12/17 & 12/18
Mental Health First Aid for people who interact with youth.** 9:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

[Click Here for Details](#)



Mental Health First Aid training on campus for people who interact with youth.

Training includes includes modules on self-harm and disordered eating in addition to the core modules.

December 17 & 18, 2015- 9:00 am-4:30 pm

Please RSVP via email to [Callista](#)

For almost 15 years now I have put physical activity into my schedule. I almost always have a 1.5 hour block in my daily schedule for exercise. The time moves around based on what I have going on that day, but I try to avoid scheduling it later in the day because if I book in the morning or mid-day I'm really good at staying with it.

I'm not kidding, my assistant knows to not schedule meetings in my physical activity block (unless it's really important) and I find this works really well for me.

I'm fortunate because I enjoy physical activity so it doesn't feel like a chore. I advise finding something you enjoy in order to stick with it. You don't have to go running or lift weights, if it's active and you enjoy it you'll do it regularly.

Do you have some tips for managing workplace stress?

My number one piece of advice is physical activity. If I'm active almost daily it helps a lot with dealing with workplace stress. The other thing is to try and find time in the day to not be frenetic and on the go. Take 5-10 minutes to step back from your work and breathe.

Tracy Horne, Co-op Education

Tracy also won the draw prize of a FitBit!

Tracy stays well at the U of L with stand up paddleboard yoga. She has been taking yoga classes through Spirit in Motion for a year now. In Summer 2015 SUP Yoga was a new offering, and she attended a few sessions at Park Lake.

She was attracted to the activity because she loves paddle boarding and have been growing in her yoga practice. Since first hearing about SUP Yoga on the Lululemon blog she wanted to try it and was ecstatic when her yoga studio began offering the classes!

Tracy got started in yoga when she moved back to Lethbridge in 2014 and her new coworkers encouraged her to get into Yoga. She was introduced to Vickie of Spirit in Motion at the last Life Balance Fair and joined the studio shortly after. Tracy's practice grew with the

[Chasse](#) no later than December 10th. You will then receive a confirmation email with further details for registration and training.

If you'd like to learn more about this program [visit the website](#).



Managing Mental Health in the Workplace Workshops

Homewood Health Registered Psychologist ([employee and family assistance provider](#)) will be providing customized training to managers, supervisors and



Also, **humour is a great way to reduce stress**. Trying to laugh and be relaxed at work is very important. Light meeting with jokes make work an easy-going experience and is helpful in not allowing things to get too intense. Watching stressed out people in the workplace is stressful so the more we can relax, the better it is for everyone.

[To read more interviews with our senior leaders, please visit the Wellness website!](#)



Copeland always on the move - for good reason

To read full story [visit original article](#).

Dr. Jennifer Copeland, an associate professor of kinesiology at the University of Lethbridge, delivered a PUBLIC Professor Series lecture on November 26 at Lethbridge City Hall, titled Sitting, Standing

professional help of Laurie, her favourite Spirit in Motion teacher; she completed her yoga training in Bali, is a Certified Canadian Counsellor, and recently got her certification in SUP Yoga. “She has been patient, kind, and encouraging.”

For SUP Yoga, Tracy rented the board, paddle, and PFD from High Level Canoes & Kayaks.

Paddleboard yoga requires a sense of humour! Simple yoga positions become tricky on the board (like standing still) so extra patience / willingness to experiment is required. The wind in her second class did NOT help! Tracy says to keep focused on the nose of the board to maintain balance.

Her advice for someone that wants to get started in SUP yoga but didn't know how is to start with a yoga basics class (on dry land) to become familiar with the positions. Then just get out and try a SUP Yoga class! The instructor begins with paddleboard basics then simple yoga positions - nothing to be

employees on recognizing and responding to mental illness in the workplace.

**January 28, 2016,
12:30 pm – 4:30
pm AH100**

- [Register now!](#)

Refreshments will be provided!



2015 Employee Health & Wellness Survey Results

Thank you to all who took the time to fill out the 2015 Employee Health & Wellness Survey. The goal was to capture trends, identify health and

and Stepping: The Health Implications of our Daily Behaviour.

She explains that even the most active people are still very sedentary, with the average Canadian sitting about nine to 10 hours per day.

“You can train for a marathon and still spend 85 per cent of your time sitting,” she says.

This thinking has given birth to the catch phrase, ‘sitting is the new smoking’. Copeland agrees, in part, with the statement but says it is not entirely accurate.

“From a risk perspective, it might actually be true. An hour of sitting has been equated with smoking two cigarettes, and while it’s great such a statement resonates with people, I think it oversimplifies the physiology. Smoke is a carcinogen, and it’s easy for me to tell you what to do with smoking, ‘Don’t smoke, at all’, but I can’t tell you to never sit down.”

What it amounts to is a new way of looking at how we live our day-to-day lives, and it has inspired Copeland in her research activities.

nervous about! You can always rent a board to practice with alone / with a friend before or after taking a class.

Doing yoga once each week helps Tracy mentally because she’s learned mindfulness and the focus required takes my mind away from stressors. SUP Yoga has been especially relaxing as it takes place in a beautiful natural setting. Physically, her flexibility has improved and she feels empowered to pursue other fitness activities.

Thank you Tracy for sharing how **YOU stay well at the U of L!!**



Get *koselig* this winter!

A recent [Fast Company article](#) delved into the mindset of Norwegian residents and how they cope with long, cold winters with a much lower rate of

wellness programming and improve where possible. 574 employees (or 49.4%) responded and we have captured the results.

[Read the summary of the survey results on our online brochure!](#)



Have Yourself a Healthy Holiday!

It’s the most wonderful time of the year! Long holidays, time with family & friends, and lots of food! It’s great to indulge and enjoy the goodies you’re surrounded by but making a couple of simple

Originally from Atlantic Canada – Amherst, Nova Scotia in particular – Copeland earned her undergraduate degree in biology at Mount Allison University. Always into exercising, she discovered that her interests were primarily directed at physiology and wrote her fourth-year paper on the effects of exercise on physiology. It spurred her to pursue a master's at the University of New Brunswick (UNB) that focused on exercise and sport science, and she later completed a PhD in exercise science at UNB.

For the majority of her research life, that focus was directed towards studies on physical activity across the lifespan and healthy aging. Now, the research is from the other end of the spectrum.

"It's called behaviour dynamics. We've moved away from looking at everything in isolation, such as how much physical activity do you do, how much sedentary time is in your day, and how much you sleep, because we know that they all interact," she says. "It's so easy for me to tell you to not smoke. It's another thing to tell you how much you should move and how much you should sit, because we don't know that yet, and that's what makes it such interesting research."

seasonal depression than expected. Major reasons for this include:

Get Outside- Norwegians celebrate the things one can only do in winter. "People couldn't wait for the ski season to start." Getting outside is a known mood booster, and so Norwegians keep going outside, whatever is happening out there.

Get Koselig- *koselig* means a sense of coziness. People light candles, light fires, drink warm beverages, and sit under fuzzy blankets. There's a community aspect to it too; it's not just an excuse to sit on the couch watching Netflix. They have plenty of festivals and community activities creating the sense that everyone was in it together.

Enjoy the Scenery- people are enamored with the sheer beauty of the season. In Norway, when the sun doesn't rise above the horizon, multiple hours a day can still look like sunrise and sunset, and against the snow.

healthy decisions can help stave off the holiday weight gain.

Some strategies to try include:

Bring Your Own Food- Contribute a healthy dish to a gathering to ensure there's something you can indulge in.

Don't Shop Hungry- To cut down on the lure of fast and unhealthy foods, never go shopping on an empty stomach.

Eat Before Going to a Party- Before going out, have a healthy snack to curb your appetite.

Keep Healthy Snacks at the Office- Stash healthy foods in your desk at work

Copeland is active, a long distance runner who has competed in seven marathons and five ultra-marathons and who has run as far as 100 kilometres in a race. Being in great physical condition though doesn't preclude her from worrying about how much time she sits in her office when she's not on the running trail – hence the stand-up desk.

“We have been trying to get people to be active for decades and physical activity levels have not really improved,” she says, citing studies that say only 15 per cent of Canadians get 30 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous activity.

“We're not making much headway in terms of getting people moving, so maybe we need to think about another strategy, such as trying to sit less. If you're not going to do any vigorous physical activity, what if you get more light activity throughout your day? Are you better off if you stand a bit more, or maybe walk around a bit more? Research is suggesting that you are.”

Get up and get moving has never seemed so relevant.

CHANGE YOUR MINDSET

"One of the things we do a lot... is we bond by complaining about the winter," says Leibowitz. "It's hard to have a positive wintertime mindset when we make small talk by being negative about the winter."

This is easy enough to change; simply refuse to participate in the Misery Olympics. Talk about how the cold gives you a chance to drink tea or hot chocolate all day. Talk about ice skating, or building snowmen. Bundle up and go for a walk outside, knowing that you'll likely feel warmer and happier after a few minutes. Better yet, go with a friend. Social plans are a great reason to haul yourself out from under the covers.

so you're not as tempted by the treats piling up at the office.

(Source: [Real Simple](#))



MENTAL HEALTH TIP OF THE MONTH

Create a meaningful budget: Financial problems cause stress. Over-spending on our "wants" instead of our "needs" is often the culprit. Did you know? Homewood Health provides 'Plan Smart' coaching services available to employees with a benefit plan - and one of the topics is financial counselling! Contact them for free today - 1800-663-1142.



Wishing you the very best of the Holiday Season from Suzanne, Susan and Rachel!
