

• Portion control can help cut spending. Page 2D •

The Times LIVING

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It's never too late to improve life

Dear David: My life could be worse and I believe I have made some good decisions recently, but I'm still haunted by my past — my terribly dysfunctional childhood, two failed marriages and a slew of bad choices. Lately, I haven't been OK and I'm not sure I'll ever be. It feels like the stress, the memories and the running are taking their toll. I'm so tired of pretending I'm OK. At times I think I'm crazy. I'm often numb and feel as though I am in a fog. Is it impossible for some people to heal? Does it matter how much time has lapsed? I'm tired and know it's time for help, but have I waited too late? — Wondering if it's Too Late

Dear WIITL: I think you're describing genuine reasons why many people seek out and enter into counseling. They recognize life could be better and, until it is, they feel unfulfilled and experience a type of depression that comes with wasting unfulfilled potential. To answer your questions directly, **NO**, it's not impossible to heal and it doesn't matter how much time has lapsed. You may want to start by reading "The Courage to Create" by Rollo May. The goal for all of us is to live to realize our potentials. Your path is yours alone. Finding and following it will be the only way for you, or anyone, to feel whole and complete. I encourage you to find a good therapist. Be willing to interview several because you'll want to find a good match for your unique personality and current needs.

Dear David: I'm a female who is in a wonderful two-year friendship with a man I formerly worked with. Lately, our friendship has had sexual overtones and I'm aware of the popular idea that once sexuality enters the picture, men and women cannot remain friends. Is it possible to have a sexual relationship with a friend and still remain friends? — Just Friends or More?

Dear Just Friends: A sexual relationship is different from a friendship. When you bring the two together and have a friendship to which you have added sexuality, you are making a significant change in the nature of the relationship.

One of the major troubles in introducing sexuality into a friendship is that as the intimacy develops, one person may become more involved than the other. If one person is viewing the relationship as simply a sexual relationship between friends, and the other is feeling more like a couple, a conflict exists. Frequently, people begin such relationships believing either they can handle the situation or the partner will come around to their way of thinking.

I encourage both of you to discuss what you want and attempt to move in the same direction. Certainly, a firm foundation for a committed relationship is beginning as friends. Talk and decide whether you wish to risk the friendship or choose to maintain the friendship and pass on the sexuality. That decision should be a mutual one.

Marriage and family therapist David McMillian can be heard on "Strategies for Living" every weekday from 11 a.m. to noon on www.strategiesforliving.com and from 8-9 a.m. Saturdays on Newsradio 710 KEEL.



Stan Carpenter/The Times

Jinan Halim (left), Shadia Hamden, Dr. Neil Halim and Nadia Hamdan joke around before the girls head off to their boxercise class at Christus Schumpert Fitness Center. The family workouts together to stay fit as well as spend time together.

Building a strong family

Exercise is good for fitness, quality time

By Donecia Pea
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There's no time like the beginning of a new year to jump-start your workout plan.

Instead of struggling alone to keep that resolution, make health and fitness a family thing.

That's what Dr. Neil Halim of Fairfield Family Clinic and his wife, Bassima, have done with daughters Laila, 5, Yasmeen, 9, and Jinan, 13.

The family works out at Christus Schumpert Wellness Center Healthplex in Shreveport at least five days a week.

"We've been going to Schumpert pretty much since the kids were young," Bassima Halim said. "But, for the most part, I've always tried to stay active."

Not only does their workout include gym time, occasionally they take family walks or ride their bikes along Clyde Fant Memorial Parkway or do other activities. "My two older daughters participate in gymnastics. And my husband does kung fu. And they all totally enjoy that in addition to the gym. ... But the gym is a given. It's like our haven."

And a family that works out together

stays healthy together.

"It's a great way to spend some time together besides sitting on the couch and snacking," said Julie Caswell, health promotion coordinator at Christus Schumpert Wellness Center Healthplex.

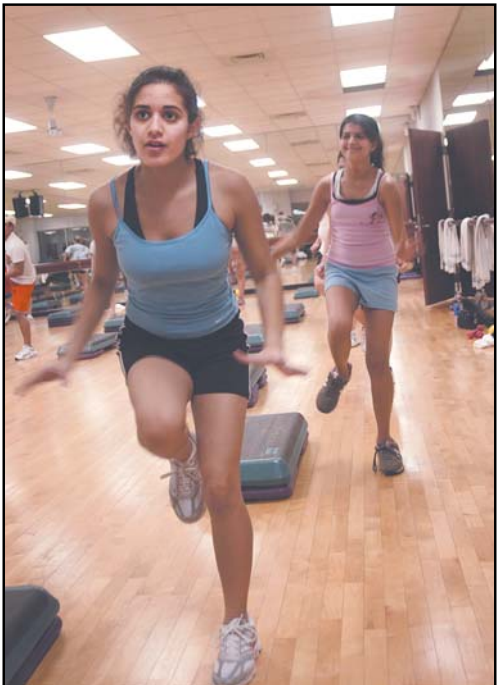
"It's just such a good opportunity to teach someone about good health habits," she said. "And the more you do it, the more it becomes a habit instead of a 'have to' kind of thing. For instance, hiking is an activity that maybe you could build into a family vacation."

Relying on family members as your workout buddies helps keep everyone on board. "Even as adults, if we don't enjoy doing it, we probably won't stay with it even though we know we should," Caswell said.

"Whenever you have a workout partner, especially a family, you tend to stick it out longer," said Joey Vallot, a certified fitness instructor at Willis-Knighton North Fitness and Wellness Center.



Caswell



Stan Carpenter/The Times

Jinan Halim (left) and her cousin Nadia Hamdan workout in their boxercise class at Christus Schumpert Fitness Center.



Stan Carpenter/The Times

Bassim Halim takes a boxercise class with her daughter and nieces. Bassim and husband Neil Halim have been exercising their family since all of their three daughters were young. They see going to the gym as great family time.

■ See FIT 2D

Tips for family fitness ideas • 2D

Filmmaker raises more than \$1.25M for feature film project

By Alexandyr Kent
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The past year has been a great one for filmmaker Jeffrey Goodman. In January 2005 he moved back to Shreveport, his hometown, after 10 years in Los Angeles, for the sole purpose of making his first feature film, "A Matter of Principle."

Goodman, who has made six short films, spent four months in the first half of 2005 putting together a business plan. In late May, he began meeting privately with local investors to see if they were interested in investing in his \$2 million feature film project.

"I honestly thought when I came back here, there was a good chance I wouldn't raise a penny," said Goodman while sitting in a home office in front of a ping pong table turned computer desk, surrounded

by orderly stacks of business plans and press clippings.

In July, Goodman secured an agreement with his first investor. To date, he's raised more than \$1.25 million.

He is confident more money will come before he finishes his fundraising efforts Jan. 31. "I feel like I have well over \$1.5 million," he said. "I feel confident that I will get the remaining of the \$2 million by the end of the month."

He owes success to many factors, none more important than pitching the making of "A Matter of Principle" as an investment opportunity.

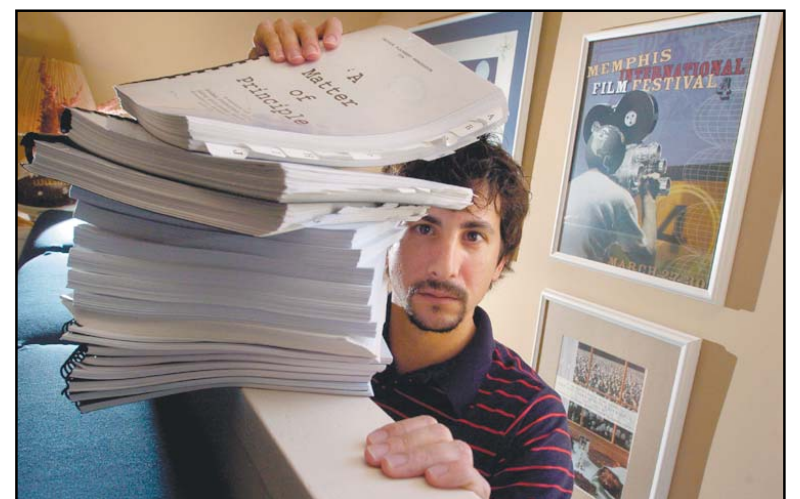
"I really just try to put the numbers forward and talk in a straight, business-to-business fashion," Goodman said. "I've realized the medium is a business and I've got to figure out a way to make my art and be commercial about it."

Evidence of his business mind-

set is present in his inch-thick business plan that includes detailed information about how the budget will be spent, how investors can take advantage of Louisiana and federal tax benefits, and how investors will benefit if "A Matter of Principle" is profitable.

For investors George and Katy Merriman, of Shreveport, investing in Goodman's first feature just appeared to make good sense. "We thought the project was really well thought out. We were both personally impressed by Jeffrey," Katy Merriman said. "We thought it was really important for Shreveport and really important for our family."

Of particular interest to the Merrimans was Goodman's connection to the screenwriter for "A Matter of



Jim Hudelson/The Times

Local filmmaker Jeffrey Goodman has raised more than \$1.25 million for his feature film project "A Matter of Principle." He feels confident we will raise the \$2 million he needs by the end of the month.

■ See FILM 2D

To rein in budget, plan food expenses

Did holiday spending on gifts and family feasts leave you broke? Maybe one of your new year's resolutions was to get your budget under control and managing food expenses, a major expenditure for most of us, is critical to holding down costs.

One of the most important — but often neglected — things in food planning is to determine how much money is to be spent on food and budget for it. Too often, food is bought with the money left over after bills have been paid and there is not much left.

Steps in planning your expenditures for food are:

■ Estimate your food budget based on the number of people to be fed, their ages and activities.

■ Read grocery store newspaper and mail ads to enable you to plan meals around specials.

■ Plan weekly menus that offer nutrition and variety. Incorporate use of leftovers. Try turning leftovers into tasty, new dishes using convenience foods.

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■ Make a shopping list. This is essential if you are to save time and money.

■ Use coupons and refund offers for items you really need or will use.

■ Limit shopping trips to save time and money.

■ Avoid impulse purchases. Buy only if an item is a good buy, nutritious and your family needs it and will eat it.

■ Be aware of location or placement of foods. More costly items usually are placed at eye level. Those end-of-aisle displays are not always a bargain.

■ Consider cost-per-serving when buying meats.

■ Read labels. As of Jan. 1, 2006,

RECIPE

MEAT SKILLET DINNER

Serves 7

- 1 lb. extra lean ground beef
- ½ green bell pepper, chopped
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 cups canned, crushed tomatoes
- 2 cups water
- ½ tsp. black pepper
- 1 cup uncooked long grain white rice

Cook beef, green pepper and onion in a large fry pan until browned. Drain off excess fat. Add tomatoes, water and pepper. Heat to boiling. Stir in rice. Cover and cook over low heat about 25 minutes until rice is tender. Add a little water during cooking, if needed.

Approximate values per serving: 226 calories, 6 g fat, 24 mg cholesterol, 16 g protein, 26 g carbohydrates, 89 mg sodium.

trans fat amounts must be listed on the nutrition facts labels on all packaged foods with a half-gram or more of trans fat per serving. Reading labels is your best guide to product composition, nutrition information, number of servings, preparation instructions, open dating and economy.

■ Consider alternate forms of food available such as fresh, frozen or canned. Substitute one for

another if it offers better value.

■ Handle food with care. Remember, food wasted is money wasted.

■ Connie Acclin is extension educator with the LSU AgCenter. Her column runs Fridays. Write to her at 2408 E. 70th St., Shreveport, LA 71105-4702, or e-mail to caclin@agctr.lsu.edu.

Fit: Families can help encourage each other

Continued from 1D

Some local fitness centers also include programs specifically designed for families.

"It's just such a family-oriented place. ... They have a kid-fit program for the children. It introduces them to weight and range of motion and muscles, yoga, basketball, tennis and swimming," said Bassima Halim, referring to the Christus Schumpert Wellness Center Healthplex.

Family exercise has long-term benefits for children as well. "Parents are serving as very good role models when they exercise," Caswell said. "If children see parents exercising and know it's important and understand the benefits, they will follow in their parents' shoes."

Vallot added, "If you exercise at a younger age, you're much more likely to exercise through adulthood."

Following are some other family fitness ideas that everyone can enjoy.

Family fitness ideas

Play your child's favorite school games like tag, cops and robbers, Simon says and red light green light. Research at your local library if you don't remember the rules, or just make up your own rules.

Have fun and get creative while playing with your toddler or preschooler. Run like a gorilla, walk like a spider, hop like a bunny or stretch like a cat.

Include fun physical activities during family vacations such as hiking, biking, skiing, snorkeling, swimming, camping or even bring along a ball or Frisbee.

Turn chores into family competitions such as "Who can pull the most weeds out of the vegetable garden?" and "Who can collect the most litter in the neighborhood?"

Change up activities. For instance, let your children take turns choosing the activity of the day or week, which can include batting cages, bowling and fast-food play areas. As long as you are doing it as a family, it's OK.

Source: msn.com

HOME GYM: If you have any type of dumbbells, you can create your own body circuit type program, Vallot said. "Make sure you work all major muscle groups," he said.

"If you do it where you're doing exercises back to back, you can keep your target cardiovascular rate up. But you have to keep moving. You can do barbell curls, tricep

extensions, rolls for your back," Vallot said.

"The main goal is to keep going with little or no rest in between so that your heart rate stays in the target zone. Depending on your age, you want to do that at least 20 minutes, three to five times a week."

FAMILY WALKS, CYCLING, ROLLER BLADING: Something

as simple as an evening stroll or bicycle ride can become a fun post-dinner family outing. "Even if the kids are little, you can put them in a wagon or in the back of the bike if they're smaller," Caswell said. "And, as they get older, give them their own bike and teach them those skills."

FAMILY COMPETITION: "I've seen a lot of families do this," Vallot said. He suggests getting each family member's weight, body composition and girth measurements (including abdomen and waist). Then have a 12-week time trial and award a prize to whoever loses the most weight.

"That gives some motivation because they work harder to win the prize."

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Vallot

Film: Preproduction set to begin in February

Continued from 1D

Principle," Max Allan Collins. Collins, whose graphic novel "Road to Perdition" was adapted into an Academy Award-winning feature film starring Tom Hanks, has authored numerous short stories includes "A Matter of Principal," about a hit man who comes out of retirement.

"Jeffrey shared the story about meeting the author and how the relationship grew over the years," Merriman said. "We thought that spoke of real success."

In 2003, Goodman shot a short film based on Collins' screen adaptation. The film took home the best dramatic short prize at the Los Angeles DIY Film Festival.

Goodman now has in hand a finished feature-length script by Collins. Goodman plans to move from fundraising into the preproduction phase after Jan. 31 and maintains no illusions about his challenges getting easier.

"Everyone says, I bet you can't

wait to be done with this fundraising part," Goodman said. "What are you talking about? It's all hard. Casting is hard. Hiring the right people around you is hard. Making a good movie is really hard. Editing a good movie and making it look and sound good is really hard. Getting a movie sold is really hard."

Goodman has set aside a significant portion of the budget for marketing. Once the film is finished, he plans to screen it at major film festivals and for film distributors in hopes of landing a theatrical distribution deal.

He's hopeful the film will find a market and serve as a selling point for Shreveport's growing film industry. More than a dozen movies are or will be filmed in northwest Louisiana in the coming months, including "The Guardian," starring Kevin Costner, and "Premonition," starring Sandra Bullock.

Goodman likens the region's opportunity to build a stable film production industry to Shreveport's economic roots. "The film industry is a high-risk, high-reward industry and so is the oil and gas

industry. What's interesting about Shreveport is it takes an entrepreneurial spirit to make movies and drill oil wells. That's how the city was created and that's kind of how films are created."

'Beauty and the Beast' adds show

The Peter Pan Players youth theater troupe is adding a performance of its current production, "Beauty and the Beast," at 7 p.m. Saturday.

The production is taking place at the Marjorie Lyons Playhouse, corner of Wilkinson and Woodlawn, on the campus of Centenary College, 2911 Centenary Blvd., Shreveport.

Remaining performances are 7 p.m. Thursday and Friday and 2 p.m. Sunday. The Saturday matinee is sold out. Tickets cost \$20 for adults and \$15 for children 12 and under. For tickets, call (318) 869-5242.

— From Staff Reports

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