



SOS TUNEUP

The tests and checkups to get at this time in your life.

COLONOSCOPY

Get this 30-minute exam beginning in your 50s. It looks at the inside lining of the colon, where precancerous polyps develop. "High-risk patients with a family history of colon cancer should be tested every five years," says Dr. Richard Lang, medical director of Executive Health at Cleveland Clinic. "Those who test clean, every 10."

PSA TEST

This blood test is used to screen for prostate cancer by measuring the levels of prostate specific antigen. Men in their 50s should discuss the pros and cons of the screening with their physician since not all high PSA levels indicate cancer and can lead to unnecessary treatments.

DIABETES SCREENING

Have this done as recommended by your physician. Untreated diabetes can lead to heart disease, kidney failure and blindness. According to the American Diabetes Association, 8.1 million Americans have undiagnosed diabetes.

BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENING

This is an effective indicator of hypertension. Also talk to your doctor about starting an aspirin therapy to help reduce the risk of a heart attack or stroke.

EYE EXAM

According to the Vision Council, 11.2 percent of Americans wear reading glasses. "Retina health is important — even if you're using reading glasses, you could have other eye issues like cataracts," says Lang.

BONE SCAN

Approximately 40 percent of postmenopausal women in the U.S. have low bone density and 7 percent have osteoporosis. This 30-90 minute test is recommended for women ages 50-65.

ANIMAL INSTINCTS

GET A SNEAK PEEK AT THE TRENDY WORKOUT EVERYONE WILL BE DOING IN SIX MONTHS.

FOLLOWING IN THE STEPS of P90X and CrossFit, Zuu could be the next big thing in high-intensity interval workouts. Developed in Australia, the routines mimic animal movements and use your own body weight to keep muscles lean and mean. Amanda Scelsi, a clinical exercise physiologist and Zumba instructor at MetroHealth, breaks the workout down.



THE COBRA

By holding a low plank and shifting your body weight left to right, this move combines isometric exercise, which involves holding one position, and concentric and eccentric exercise, which involves lengthening and shortening of muscles. "The combination of those types of muscular contractions is better for increasing strength," says Scelsi. "This specific move would target core and upper body strength."



THE FROG SQUAT

Beef up your lower half with this move, which sends leg and glute muscles through a full range of motion by keeping elbows bent and inside each knee, pressing your hands together and repeatedly squatting and standing. "[With this motion] you can elongate your muscle to its full extent, which can generate more strength and build muscle faster," says Scelsi.



THE GORILLA

In a squat, lean forward and rest your hands on the floor, jump so your feet land on either side of your hands and repeat the motion so that you're running on all fours. Including this exercise ensures your heart strength matches your muscle strength. "You're moving across the length of the gym, and you're moving quickly," says Scelsi. "[Cardio] is a really important component of any well-rounded exercise regimen."



Fizz Out
Sorry to burst your bubble, but artificial sweeteners in zero-calorie carbonated beverages might be adding to your waistline. A 10-year study of 466 European- and Mexican-Americans over the age of 65 showed a waist increase of 3.16 inches in daily diet soda drinkers compared to a 0.8 inch increase in nondrinkers. Researchers say high sugar and acidic content take a toll on digestive bacteria and trigger a release of unnecessary amounts of insulin.

PROOF TEST

The word colonoscopy conjures up mostly unpleasant images. Dr. Gregory Cooper, a gastroenterologist at University Hospitals, hopes to allay the fears associated with the test with sDNA, new technology he's researching that only requires a stool sample. He talks to us about the importance of colon cancer screening.

TEN YEARS AGO only 40 percent of adults were screened. We're at 60 percent today and hoping to get to 80 percent in the next 10 years. The prevalence of colon cancer and polyps doesn't start going up until age 50. Screening is important because the vast majority of precancerous polyps do not cause symptoms. Screening is the only way to detect and remove them. Approximately 4 to 5 percent of the general public will develop colon cancer with age and genetics as the highest risk factors. If caught early, the survival rate is 90 percent. If the cancer has metastasized to other organs, the five-year survival rate is less than 13 percent. The best test is the one that gets done. — as told to Barry Goodrich

TRACK STARS

PEDOMETERS ARE SO LAST DECADE. Over the last few years, fitness trackers have turned into more than just step counters, tracking a variety of exercises, sleep quality and heart rate. With so many to choose from, we take three popular models on two-week test runs.



DRIVE CLUB

We've all got our excuses why we're not exercising. Here are some tips on how to deal with three major motivation drainers.

JOB

Put working out on your to-do list as you would an appointment or meeting. Aim for mornings because you're more likely to be distracted later in the day, says Scott Crabiel, a personal training coordinator at Akron General Health and Wellness Center. "If [exercise] is on the schedule, it's much more likely you're going to get that done," he says.

NEW BABY

Being awakened every couple hours by that new crying bundle of joy can sap your desire to hit the gym in a hurry. Focus on getting sleep by going to bed earlier or letting family and friends take care of your newborn for a couple hours. "When you're well-rested, you're going to feel good naturally and your motivation is going to be higher," Crabiel says.

YOUR SIGNIFICANT OTHER

Sharing the same environment as your couch potato spouse can flip your motivated mindset. Instead, join a health club or take a group fitness class with active friends. "Spend more time with people who are doing the things or being the person that you would like to become," Crabiel says.



Fitbit ChargeHR
\$149.95, fitbit.com

Wearability: 4.5 While it takes a few days to get used to the large band, the adjustable watchlike strap keeps this tracker secure. The digital screen lets us quickly monitor our steps, heart rate and more.

Step tracker: 3.5 It's pretty sensitive and not always accurate. We were bummed we didn't get steps if both hands were on a shopping cart but did get "steps" for clapping in our seats at a Cleveland Indians game.

Sleep log: 3 Sure it automatically senses when we go to sleep, but the report isn't as detailed as we would like only tracking asleep, restless and awake periods.

Pros: It's the gateway drug for an Apple Watch — not only does it vibrate when someone calls your smartphone, but the display screen has caller ID.

Cons: Though it claims to have a battery life of up to five days, we had to charge our Fitbit for at least two hours every three days.



Jawbone UP2
\$99.99, jawbone.com

Wearability: 4 No screen makes the small band sleek and fashionable, and we occasionally forgot we were even wearing it.

Step tracker: 4 While no screen means turning to the smartphone app for step total updates, being buzzed after sitting at our desks for 30 minutes got us off our butts.

Sleep log: 3 When it did register sleep, it was pretty accurate. But on three occasions, the tracker left sleep mode in the middle of the night, leading to missing data.

Pros: The UP smartphone app's Smart Coach delivers relevant dietary, fitness and sleep advice using the data it collects, and the band comes close to its promised seven-day battery life.

Cons: Though it wasn't for us, it could be easy to forget to put the UP2 into sleep tracking mode, and twice the band managed to become unlatched and fall off.



Timex Ironman Move x20
\$99.95, timex.com

Wearability: 3.5 The half-circle of rigid plastic housing the display creates a slightly awkward fit, but the bright digital screen and big buttons make up for it.

Step tracker: 3.5 Great for general walking and running (you can calibrate the step count to your stride for each), but it doesn't capture cycling data and struggles while we're holding the handle during lawn mowing.

Sleep log: 3.5 The manual sleep function records light and deep sleep like a dream, but generally underreported the time spent awake during the night.

Pros: A marathon of functionality for the price: digital display, text and phone notification, handy weather readout and full seven-day battery life.

Cons: The Bluetooth sync can be a little clunky, sometimes taking several attempts. We would love a way to manually add bike or swimming activity.

*scale of 1 to 5

THINK PINK

If the Food and Drug Administration follows the recommendation of its advisory panel later this month, flibanserin — known as "female Viagra" — will be the first government-approved drug to address sexual dysfunction in premenopausal women. Dr. Linda D. Bradley, vice chair of obstetrics, gynecology and the Women's Health Institute at the Cleveland Clinic, turns us on to the new medication.

TAKE A DAILY DOSE. Unlike Viagra, the "pink pill" needs to be used every day. "Flibanserin affects the brain chemicals involved in desire," explains Bradley. The drug increases the effects of desire-enhancing chemicals such as dopamine and decreases inhibitors such as serotonin.

WATCH OUT FOR SIDE EFFECTS. The FDA advisory panel voted 18-6 to recommend approval of the drug but added there are side effects. "There might be a possible interaction when taken with alcohol, and some women who have taken the drug have reported dizziness and fainting," says Bradley.

WE'RE JUST GETTING WARMED UP. Drug makers have been trying to get a female version on the market since the '90s. "By approving this drug, we will be opening a Pandora's box for newer and improved drugs that look at the libido issue for women," says Bradley.

APP SCORE

START USING YOUR SMARTPHONE for more than texts and Instagram. These three doctor-recommended apps help you track your sleep, runs and meals.



FOR SLEEP

NAME OF APP: Sleep Time

HOW IT WORKS: Use it to avoid a cloudy wake-up. The app uses your phone's accelerometer to track how much you move as you sleep and then pulls you out of slumber when you're least groggy.

GOOD TO KNOW: By building a graph of your sleep patterns, the app lets you see how many REM cycles you've gone through in a given night. With these reports, it's easy to chart how efficiently you're sleeping, how likely you are to hit the snooze button on each day of the week and even how staying up late affects your sleep quality.

DOCTOR'S NOTE: Dr. Sam Friedlander, a University Hospitals sleep doctor, says that Sleep Time is useful for him and his patients because it helps establish good sleep hygiene. This requires establishing consistent sleep patterns. "They get reinforcement from [Sleep Time] about the things they are doing positively and also try to retrain the things they are doing negatively," he says.



FOR RUNNING

TRY: MapMyRun

HOW IT WORKS: As you run, it tells you your mile splits and stores them so you can track your progress and be realistic about your exercise.

GOOD TO KNOW: MapMyRun has a GPS calculator that allows users to find and create routes nearby.

DOCTOR'S NOTE: Dr. Peter Greco, a MetroHealth internal medicine doctor who runs 20 to 25 miles a week near his home, has been using MapMyRun since he got rid of his BlackBerry three years ago. "If you think you're going at a certain pace, but you're actually going at a slower pace, that's important to know," he says. "That could mess you up if you're trying to run a certain pace for a race or just for your health."



FOR MEALS

TRY: MyFitnessPal

HOW IT WORKS: The app tracks what you eat from calories and fat to sugar. MyFitnessPal's database is extensive — if you eat it, you can track it.

GOOD TO KNOW: You can view colored pie charts that tell you what percentage of your food comes from carbs, fat and protein. Based on the information, a user's percentages are set to help reach individual fitness goals.

DOCTOR'S NOTE: Dr. Debra Anne DeJoseph, who specializes in internal medicine at University Hospitals, was a dietician before going to medical school. She says MyFitnessPal teaches users the basics of dietetics. "When people just record what they eat, without any other instructions, they lose weight and become more conscious of what they are doing," she says. "It's a little bit like a game."