



**February Chapter Chit-Chat 2016**  
**Barnstable & Plymouth Counties**  
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Jim asked his friend, Tony, whether he had bought his wife anything for Valentine's Day. 'Yes,' came the answer from Tony who was a bit of a chauvinist, 'I've bought her a belt and a bag.' 'That was very kind of you,' Jim added, 'I hope she appreciated the thought.' Tony smiled as he replied, 'So do I, and hopefully the vacuum cleaner will work better now.'

Thank you to my chapters for coming to the resumes workshops. That's done for another year. Next on my calendar is scheduling my chapter visits to present this years' TOPS....**LEAN ON ME FOR SUPPORT PROGRAM.**

A new chapter has started in Kingston. Jan 4<sup>th</sup> had an "open house" to explain what TOPS is all about. Their first meeting was Jan.11<sup>th</sup>. no meeting Jan. 18<sup>th</sup> (they meet at the senior center and it was closed due to Martin Luther King day) meeting Jan 25<sup>th</sup>. 7 of the eight members weighed in with a total weight loss of 24 pounds not 1 gain. They also had a new member join that night. Sue Pye the leader from Halifax presented a very informative program. 2 members came from the Duxbury chapter came to show their support. Thank you to Kay from East Falmouth for all her assistance in getting them up and running.

**BUCCANEER BASH APRIL 1<sup>ST</sup> AND 2<sup>ND</sup> AT THE SEACREST BEACH HOTEL IN FALMOUTH.**  
**YOU SHOULD ALL HAVE YOUR PACKETS. LETTER AND FORMS ARE AVAILABLE ON**  
**MATOPS.COM. ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS PLEASE CONTACT ME.**

### **FEBRUARY IS HEART MONTH**

In February, the days are short, the year- end holidays are far behind us, and the resolutions of New Year's Eve have been subjected to the "reality check" of everyday life. We can be thankful the Valentine's Day falls at this time of year, it reminds us of matters close to the heart. This includes sharing love with others as well as regarding ourselves with a healthy self-love. Attached is an incentive heart

chart you can print for your members to fill in during the month. TOPS heart chart ...it is an oldie but goodie.

*Thought for the month: The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched – they must be felt with the heart. Helen Keller*

With February being [heart health](#) month, what better time for a quick self-check to ensure your heart is getting its fair share of TLC? The little things do truly count. Here, five heart-healthy eating and active living habits, and simple tips to build them into everyday living .

**#1. Walk more often.** One of the most accessible and best overall forms of exercise, studies show brisk walking on a regular schedule can improve efficient oxygen consumption during periods of exertion, lower resting heart rate, reduce blood pressure, and improve heart and lung efficiency.

- Make it social. Arrange walks with friends as part of a regular social routine.
- Walk to confer with colleagues at work instead of e-mailing. If you have extra break time, get outside for a brisk walk and enjoy some fresh air.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Park further away from your destination.

**#2. Be mindful of nutrition.** We all know the truth in we are what we eat. Just as certain foods can increase risk of heart disease, so can food and eating habits help ward off disease and promote health.

- Eat breakfast. Research shows that those who eat their morning meal take in more wholesome nutrients, and less fat and cholesterol throughout the day, making a positive difference in overall weight and cholesterol levels.
- When cooking, use fats sparingly. Swap out margarine and shortening for heart-healthy monounsaturated fats, such as olive and canola oils; or polyunsaturated fats from nuts and seeds. The [American Heart Association](#) recommends avoiding trans fats as much as possible. A quick clue for spotting trans fats is anything with the phrase "partially hydrogenated".
- Get in your omega-3s: swap a red meat meal for fish. Fatty fish like salmon, trout, and sardines are great sources of omega-3 fatty acids, shown to decrease risk of heart disease and help to lower blood pressure.
- Reduce sodium. Sodium can contribute to high blood pressure, a risk factor for heart disease. Purchase no-salt-added canned goods, and cut back on seasoning with salts in favor of a variety of spices.

**#3. Keep hydrated.** Your body needs to be properly hydrated for your vital organs to function properly. Dehydration can lead to constricted blood vessels, headaches, mental cloudiness, and muscle fatigue.

- Start each day with a glass of water.
- Have water accessible during workouts.
- Keep sliced lemons, limes, or cucumbers in the fridge to add some zing to glasses of water.
- Choose 100% fruit juice.

**#4. Reduce stress.** Stress is linked to high blood pressure, a faster heart rate, and slowed digestion. Studies relate it to weight gain, illnesses, and depression. Decreasing or managing stress is key to a heart-healthy lifestyle.

- Try yoga or meditation.
- Under duress, take deep, slow breaths to manage your nervous system's automatic "fight or flight" response.
- Value and prioritize sleep. Sleep is vital to mental and emotional well-being, and a cornerstone of good health.
- Exercise regularly. Not only is it good for your body, it helps your mood.

**#5. Be positive, and find the fun.** Being healthy isn't an obligation so much as it's a way of life. You can build cardiovascular fitness through an enormous range of physical activity. Find what you love, share it, and make time for it.

- Plan ahead, reserving time for what you enjoy: running, biking, hiking, swimming, aerobics, pilates, you name it.
- Try something new. Go to a zumba class, try crossfit, sign up for a fun race. You may discover an unknown passion.
- Involve family and friends. Skip the movies and make time for an outing in the park, on the trails, or touring a museum.
- Be kind to yourself. A positive attitude is essential to achieving any goal. Set realistic goals, and give yourself a pat on the back for making a solid, consistent effort to pursue them.