

West Lake Hills ECHO

Volume 7, Issue 1

January 2018

How can I get in Ski-Shape?

By Kelly Cunningham, MD, Sports Medicine specialist

Dr. Cunningham spent 15 years as a traveling doctor for the men's Olympic downhill team, accompanying the athletes throughout the US, Canada and Europe on the World Cup tour. He was able to pick up tips from some of the world's finest altitude athletes and their trainers.

Ski conditioning begins about 6 weeks prior to travel, and involves three phases:

Muscle training, Stamina & Agility

Muscle training for the skier or boarder utilizes stretching, closed & open-chain strengthening exercises, and emphasizing the core muscle groups of the spine, hips, quadriceps & hamstrings. For most recreational athletes, low-weight/high-repetition sets will be best. Another option may be a personal trainer or workout club pro to help you design a program to strengthen your core without over-stressing your joints. Joint pain is a common skier injury so muscle training will aid in prevention.

Stamina is crucial for a recreational athlete, especially at altitude. (That's another discussion for later!) Cardio conditioning can be as simple as running, jumping on a bike or elliptical, preferably using "interval" periods to increase your heart rate. Sports like tennis, swimming, and basketball have built-in interval training as part of the sport.

Speaking of sports, these are great for honing the athletic agility that helps prevent ski injury, especially at the end of a long, fatiguing ski or snowboarding day. These are "ski-adaptive" sports. "Ski-specific" training involves side-to-side training tools that focus on the specific ski muscles and coordination. Slide boards, closed-chain waist belt regimens, in or out of ski boots, are popular.

The goal is to decrease fatigue-related injury but also to increase your enjoyment, help you relax, and enjoy the sport!

If you have a history of joint pain or arthritis (DJD), consider your options before you head to the slopes— perhaps 3 to 4 weeks before your trip, you might want to explore PRP or stem cell injectable treatments in Austin as a autologous, potentially regenerative medicine alternative to steroids to ensure that you get the most out of your trip.

Austin, Texas, resident Kelly Cunningham, MD is board certified by the American College of Orthopedic Surgeons, and an active member of the Arthroscopy Association of North America and the International Cartilage Repair Society



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Bridge Point Elementary	512-732-9200
Barton Creek Elementary.....	512-732-9100

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Austin Energy	512-322-9100
Texas Gas Service	
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Time Warner Cable	
Customer Service.....	512-485-5555
Repairs.....	512-485-5080
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OTHER NUMBERS

City Administration	512-327-3628
Municipal Court	512-327-1863
Property Tax	512-854-9473
Appraisal District	512-834-9317
Chamber of Commerce.....	512-306-0023
City of West Lake Hills	www.westlakehills.org

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Meet Jonathan Heart Gallery of Central Texas

Photo taken by Volunteer Heart Gallery Photographer Laura Acton



It's a new year and time for new beginnings! The children featured in the Heart Gallery of Central Texas are waiting for their own new beginning - a forever family! Meet 12 year old Jonathan! Jonathan loves sports, especially football. He enjoyed his summer football camp and was even named Most Valuable

Player by his team! Jonathan does well with his schoolwork and enjoys making friends at school.

Learn more about Jonathan as well as foster care and adoption here in Central Texas by visiting our website: heartgallerytexas.com



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Why You Should Host an Exchange Student – Yes, You!

“International exchanges are not a great tide to sweep away all differences, but they will slowly wear away at the obstacles to peace as surely as water wears away a hard stone.”

– Former President George H.W. Bush

This time of year, the 100 or so high school exchange student programs in the U.S. are beginning to seek host families for the coming academic year for both one semester and full academic year students.

About 28,000 students come to the U.S. each year for youth exchange programs of varying lengths. Not surprisingly, their motivations vary. They want to improve their English-speaking skills. They want to establish their independence from their parents. They want to see the America of Hollywood and the streets of New York. If they don't have siblings, they would like one. They want to share the beauty and complexity of Japanese or Italian cooking. They want to play American football and be on the cheerleading team. They want to travel and see new places.

They want to live life as an American teenager.

Families who welcome these exchange students into their homes and hearts not only enrich the life of an exceptional young person, they help build people-to-people connections that span the globe and last of a lifetime.

– Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Summer 2010

I think cultural exchanges, including hosting high school exchange students, offer benefits far beyond being “a good citizen.” Beyond actually learning about another culture and how things might be done differently on a daily basis, it challenges one's assumptions about other cultures, teaches communication skills, and helps develop patience and flexibility.

Few experiences can teach you – and your children — the small but critical differences between cultures as living with someone from another country.

The benefits to America children – both our own children and others who are attending school with exchange students – are significant in ways that are difficult (if not impossible) to quantify. It's not something adults often think about. Even school administrators don't always think through how exposure to other cultures can benefit students in their districts. Think about communication for just a moment. Although your children will, of course, speak English to their exchange student, the potential for miscommunication is huge when you are talking to non-native English speakers. The processes of learning how to re-shape your thoughts, speak more clearly, and make sure what you intend to say is what is heard are important skills. Think about your assumptions about other cultures – your assumptions, and those of your children and their friends, about another country's foods, habits, or attitudes. Think about relationships, and learning how to adapt, become more cooperative, and developing an ability to be flexible. You **do** have something to offer.

Many families tell me they can't host because “we aren't a good host family.” People assume they must be outgoing, that they need

to be a family that travels a lot, or that they must be a family that goes to museums, events, and activities all the time. People assume that it is critical for a host family to live in a big city so it will be “fun” for a teen, that it is important to provide a student with his or her own bedroom, or that they must live near the high school. Many people assume you must have a high school student in your home in order to host a high school exchange student. The list of “why we're not a good family” goes on, but most of these pre-conceptions simply aren't accurate. Is it nice to travel with your student? Of course, because it's fun to share your city, your state, or your country's beautiful places. But not everyone travels much. Is it nice to live next to the high school? Of course. But let's face it, most people don't. Is it “fun” for a teen to live in the city? Sure. But nice people who have the desire, capability, and emotional intelligence to be a host family live everywhere.

The truth is, there is no typical American host family, because there is no single “typical” American family. American host families have teens and don't have teens. They have young children and toddlers. They have children who are now grown and living elsewhere, or no children at all. They have dogs or not, large homes or small ones. Single parents are families, as are grandparents. American families live in large cities, suburban areas, and in small communities. The students are not here to travel, have a tour guide, just have “fun,” or to have an easy life with a five-minute school commute. They're here to go to school, learn about our country, live with a family, and to learn what life is like for an American teen. They can play on the soccer team or have a role in the school play no matter where they live and no matter what the composition of their host family.

The key to hosting a student is not in who is in your family, but who you are as people. Good host families are people who want to share their own culture and community, and learn about someone else's. Good host parents look to give their families a glimpse of the world and introduce them to new customs and cultures.

STS Foundation is currently looking for host families in our area. If you are interested in hosting a student and enjoying this enriching experience, please contact Vicki Odom at 832-455-7881 or email me at vicki.stsfoundation@gmail.com for more information.

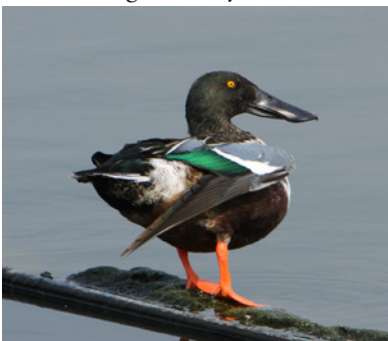


NATURE WATCH

DABBLERS AND DIVERS

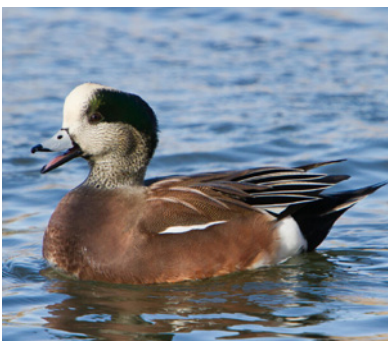
by Jim and Lynne Weber

Wintertime is the perfect time to look for ducks in Central Texas. Several species that breed far north of our state's border return to Texas in the colder months to feed in our unfrozen freshwater lakes and rivers. From the Old English 'duce', the word duck is a derivative of the verb meaning to duck or dive, or bend down low as if to get under something. It best describes the way many ducks feed, by upending or diving under the water in search of a wide variety of food sources, such as small aquatic plants, grasses, fish, insects, amphibians, worms and mollusks. Most ducks fall into either the dabbler or diver category. Dabblers feed on the surface of the water, and sometimes on land, while divers disappear completely beneath the surface and forage deep underwater. In general, divers are heavier than dabblers, which gives them the ability to submerge more easily, but they often pay the price by having more difficulty when taking off to fly.



Northern Shoveler

A medium-sized duck, the adult male (or drake) has an iridescent green head, rusty sides, and a white chest. When flushed from her nest, the adult female (or hen) will often defecate on the eggs, presumably to deter predators from eating them. This species of duck is monogamous, and stays together longer than any other known pairs of dabbling duck species.



American Wigeon

resembling a man's bald head. Its feeding behavior is distinctive among the dabbling ducks, as its short bill allows it to be much

The most distinctive dabbling duck is the Northern Shoveler (*Anas clypeada*). True to its name, it possesses a two and a half inch long bill, which is spoon-shaped and has a comb-like structure called a pecten at the edge of its beak. The pecten is used to filter food from the water and to aid in preening its

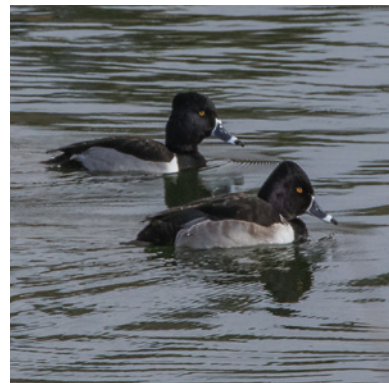
feathers. Another common dabbler is the American Wigeon (*Anas americana*), whose population is increasing throughout its range. The male has a white crown, green face patch, large white patches in its wings, and a black rear end bordered by white. At one time this duck was known as 'baldpate' due to the white crown

more efficient at plucking vegetation from both the water and sometimes even agricultural fields. The diet of this duck has been shown to include a much higher proportion of plant matter than any other dabbler species.



Lesser Scaup

grasped by a predator like a Gray Fox, an adult Lesser Scaup may play dead, rendering itself immobile with its head extended, eyes open, and wings folded close to its body. They are capable of diving underwater the day they are hatched, but are too buoyant to stay under for long, until maturity gives them the body composition and strength they need to stay underwater for longer periods of time.



Ring-necked Ducks

Usually found on smaller, calmer bodies of water like ponds, Ring-necked Ducks (*Aythya collaris*) are more readily identified by the bold white ring around their bill that the subtle purplish band around their necks for which they are named. A medium-sized diving duck, they also have a small bump or peak on the back of their black heads, with the male having a black chest, back, and rear end, with grey sides and a white stripe up the shoulder.

The next time you visit a lake, river, or pond this winter, venture out to the quiet corners to see if you can spot one of our best known dabblers or divers!

Send your nature-related questions to naturewatch@austin.rr.com and we'll do our best to answer them. If you enjoy reading these articles, check out our books, *Nature Watch Austin* and *Nature Watch Big Bend* (both published by Texas A&M University Press), and our blog at naturewatchaustin.blogspot.com.

Winter Alert! Protect Your Plants and Irrigation Systems

PROTECT YOUR PLANTS:

Water your plants thoroughly ahead of time. You need to be sure the roots are wet, not just the leaves. Much of freeze damage is from dehydration. Watering before a freeze could make a big difference in your tropicals and tender perennials.

Cover your delicate plants. Remember, you want to be sure the roots are protected, covered, or mulched well. Even if you lose the top growth of these tender plants, if the roots are alive the plants will come back in the spring. Do not cover them with plastic touching the leaves of your plants. If possible, use woven frost protection sheets such as N-Sulate (which can be folded, stored, and reused for many years) or sheets and blankets. In a mild freeze or frost, one blanket will probably do for most plants. In a hard freeze (below 30 degrees for any period of time), use a heavy blanket or several layers of sheets. You can even add a plastic over that if you want, since it won't be touching the foliage. Also, don't forget to put rocks or something heavy on the edges of your N-Sulate or blanket to be sure the wind doesn't blow it away, exposing the roots of your plants.

Don't do any heavy pruning on freeze-damaged plants until late

winter, when you think all chance of frost is over.

Remove all protective covering if the sun comes out and the temperature goes up, because it can be 32 degrees today and 70 degrees tomorrow.

Along with protecting your tender plants during the winter, remember it's not a good idea to fertilize tender tropicals that are exposed to outside temperatures during these cold months. Fertilizing encourages new growth, and that new growth is more vulnerable to freezing and near-freezing conditions than old growth is. It's OK to fertilize and encourage growth with indoor or greenhoused tropicals, although shorter days usually slow down growth no matter how much you fertilize.

PROTECT YOUR IRRIGATION SYSTEM:

Your backflow-prevention device is the most important part of your irrigation system. It's also the most vulnerable part of your system if there is a freeze. It may be located somewhere right outside the garage and next to the foundation. Cover the top by wrapping the part that is above ground with a towel. It is also best to turn off your valve.



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Special Needs Forum Presents

HOW MUCH SAVINGS DO I NEED TO HELP PROVIDE FOR MY CHILD'S LIFETIME?

The Special Needs Forum continues its free workshop series designed to educate families who have a loved one with special needs.

The next Special Needs Forum live event of the 2017-2018 school year will be held on Thursday January 11, 2018 and on the topic; How Much Savings Do I Need to Help Provide for my Child's Lifetime? Many people with a child with special needs are concerned and want to know how much savings is needed to ensure their child is cared for a lifetime. Learn from professional financial advisors about how much savings and social security your child will require.

Location: 6200 Bridgepoint Parkway
Building IV, 2nd floor

(take right off the elevator & main room will be immediately on the left)
Austin, TX 78730

Date: Thursday January 11, 2018

Time: 11:30 am - 1:00 pm

Fees: Complimentary

The Special Needs Forum is an educational resource for families who have a loved one with special needs. During the workshops you will socialize with other families, get to know businesses who specialize in helping the special needs community and learn valuable information.

This year's lineup includes a Panel of special education experts, admissions directors from various residential communities and a specialist from the Social Security Administration.

Parents and guardians of children with special needs as well as those who teach and work in the special needs care industry are invited to attend. Each Special Needs Forum workshop includes an informative presentation by a keynote speaker and a question and answer segment.

To register and to view upcoming sessions, visit:
specialneedsforum.org



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Recluse spiders

Recluse spiders are shy and, as their name suggests, do not like being out in the open. They are about the size of a quarter, with a body that is 1/2 inch long. They can be light brown, dark brown or greyish in color. They have no spines on their legs and usually have a uniform body color. Recluse spiders are known for their characteristic violin or fiddle-shaped marking on the “back” (a.k.a. cephalothorax...the front part of the spider). The real distinguishing feature is an eye pattern of three pairs of eyes arranged in a semicircle on the front of the cephalothorax.

Outside homes, recluse spiders can be found in garages or sheds, firewood piles, or piles of stored materials such as lumber, bricks, or rocks. Inside the home, these spiders are found in bedrooms, closets, bathrooms, under furniture, behind baseboards, in attics, or in cracks and crevices. They are most active at night when hunting for food.

People are typically bitten by accidentally rolling over onto a spider while sleeping or trapping a spider next to skin when putting on clothing where the spider is hiding. Recluse spiders have a cytotoxin that breaks down tissue in the bite area. Several hours after being bitten a blister forms at the bite site that may grow in size as tissue breaks down from injected venom. Infected tissue eventually sloughs off, leaving an open wound that takes a while to heal. More serious symptoms may also occur such as chills, fever, fatigue, joint pain, or nausea. If you experience problems

after being bitten by a spider, then seek medical attention immediately.

To avoid spider bites, try some (or all) of the following:

- Use sticky taps to capture spiders
- Remove bed skirts from beds (these make it easy for spiders to crawl into the bed)
- Don't leave clothes or blankets on the floor; shake out blankets and clothing before using
- When storing items, either use sealed plastic containers/ bags or tape boxes on all seams to keep spiders out
- Wear leather gloves when cleaning in undisturbed closets, attics, garages, or the yard
- Keep stacked, stored items away from the home. Do not store firewood against the house and only bring in firewood to immediately place on a fire.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com

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