



# Get in the Loop

Volume 2, Issue 3

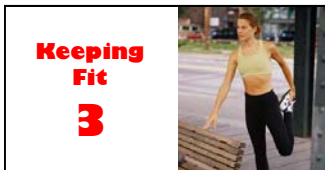
Spring 2008

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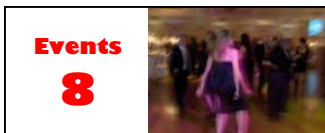
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## Letter from the editor

With the holiday season now behind us, it's time to look forward to new beginnings and opportunities.

As spring approaches, a lot of us are looking forward to the end of the school year, and many are looking for summer jobs to help earn a little extra money during the summer break.

The task is more daunting than it seems, especially for young people with lupus, who may find their illness presents a barrier to finding meaningful employment. Luckily, our fitness editor Jodie Nimigon takes the time to share information she learned at a University

of Toronto employment seminar. The seminar was presented to all students, but Jodie also discusses what people with disabilities need to know to be successful in the working world. Tanya Mahadeo also shares her ideas, reflecting on her experience disclosing lupus to her first full-time employer.

As always, Jodie also talks about fitness, this issue she lets us know what we need to know about stretching. And last but not least, Jen Huska offers us some great recipes that add fibre to our diet without compromising taste.

As mentioned before,

Spring is about changes. *In The Know* talks about recent happenings within Lupus Canada, and its provincial organizations, all for the purpose of increasing awareness of this life-threatening disease.

We always look forward to your suggestions and submissions. Feel free to contact us at [getintheloop@gmail.com](mailto:getintheloop@gmail.com).

Charlene Johnson  
Editor



## Lupus in the workplace

BY JODIE NIMIGON (FITNESS EDITOR)

Summer is fast approaching and for students that means job searching is about to begin (or has already). When you have a disability, like lupus, job searching becomes an even more complicated task. Last spring, I attended a workshop hosted by the University of Toronto regarding job searching for people with disabilities. Some invaluable information was shared with all, as well as some food for thought.

Firstly, I was struck by the following outline. Apparently the most effective way to find a job includes: asking for leads; walking into agencies; cold-calling/emailing agencies about possible job openings; and networking. Meanwhile, the least effective were internet job searching, random mailing, ads and employment agencies.

## Healthy Eating

### Nabisco 100% Bran Blueberry Muffins

#### INGREDIENTS

1 1/4 cups milk  
1 tablespoon vinegar  
1 cup Nabisco 100% Bran cereal (I just used all bran cereal, turned out fine)  
1 cup quick-cooking rolled oats  
1 egg  
1/2 cup liquid honey  
1/3 cup vegetable oil  
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour  
1 tablespoon Magic baking powder  
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1 1/2 cups fresh or frozen blueberries

#### INSTRUCTIONS

Grease large muffin tins or line with paper baking cups.

Pour milk and vinegar over cereal and rolled oats in bowl; let stand 5 minutes. Stir in egg, honey, and oil. Combine remaining ingredients, except blueberries, in large bowl.

Stir cereal mixture into dry ingredients, stirring until just moistened. Fold in blueberries.

Spoon into muffin cups, generously filling each to the top.

Bake at 400°F (200°C) for 20 to 25 minutes or until golden brown.

Cool. Store in airtight container.

Servings: 12 large muffins.



### Low-Cal Gingerbread Squares

#### INGREDIENTS

2 cups flour  
1/2 teaspoon ginger  
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon  
1/4 teaspoon cloves  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
1/3 cup margarine  
2/3 cup brown sugar  
1/2 cup molasses  
2/3 cup water  
1/4 cup raisins (optional)

#### INSTRUCTIONS

Sift together all dry ingredients and set aside. Cream margarine and brown sugar till light and fluffy. Add molasses. Beat well. Add dry ingredients, alternating with water. Beat till blended. Fold in raisins.

Spread mixture on greased 15.5" x 10.5" cookie sheet (my mom puts it in a 9" x 12" cake pan, or something like that).

Bake at 350° for approximately 35 minutes.

### Chocolate Chip Bran Muffins

#### INGREDIENTS

1 3/4 cups all purpose flour  
5 teaspoons baking powder  
3/4 teaspoons salt  
1 cup white sugar  
1/3 cup chocolate chips  
1 1/4 cups bran (or all bran cereal)  
2 eggs  
1 cup milk  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
1/2 cup vegetable oil

#### INSTRUCTIONS

Combine dry ingredients in medium bowl. Mix eggs, milk, vanilla, and oil well in fairly larger separate bowl, and add to dry ingredients. Stir to blend, but don't overmix.

Preheat oven and bake at 375°F for about 20 minutes.

Servings: 12 muffins. (some caps will be bigger than others, don't worry!)

Source: <http://www.gweep.ca/~edmonds/recipes/breakfast/muffins.html>



# Keeping Fit

## Stretching: Flexibility with finesse

BY JODIE NIMIGON  
FITNESS EDITOR

As the regular fitness contributor for *Get in the Loop*, I surprised myself by realizing that there was one important topic regarding everyday fitness that I had not addressed. Stretching is an integral part of an exercise routine, as I am sure you have all been told, and is important to treating and preventing injuries. It is important to maintain a certain amount of flexibility not only for fitness, but also for everyday life. I learned a few life lessons about stretching while enduring physiotherapy following a knee injury a couple of years ago, and will share some of these with you throughout this article.

### **Lesson #1: Do not stretch past your natural limit.**

You do not need to be touching your toes or bending your back the exact same distance as your instructor. Not everyone is meant to have the same level of flexibility. When stretching, you should only feel a slight pulling and a minimal amount of pain: it should not be unbearable.

My physiotherapist had me on a twice daily stretching routine, with several exercises, in addition to when she stretched me during my twice weekly visits.

### **Lesson #2: Modify stretches as needed.**

As someone recovering from a

knee injury who has not only lupus, but also other serious conditions, such as osteoporosis, my treatment needed to be modified to not cause further injury. More specifically, because I have a weak back I cannot do any exercise that involves putting pressure on my lower back. This includes bending, twisting, and any exercises that involve lifting both the upper and lower torso at the same time. Even with these limitations, my physiotherapist was able to modify stretching exercises so that I was able to stretch the necessary muscles for my recovery without putting undo pressure on my lower back.

If you are not sure what your body can handle, or how to modify exercises, consult your rheumatologist, other specialist and/or their physiotherapist affiliate. Once you have this information, a personal trainer can help actually show you numerous modified versions of multiple exercises. This is invaluable information, as it will serve you for life: so I feel that paying for one session with a personal trainer is well worth the investment. If you are already part of a training centre (I am a member of the local Y), they usually have trainers roaming around the centre who are there specifically to ensure participants are not misusing the equipment.

Feel free to use this resource and ask them how you can stretch your calf muscle without sitting on the floor and bending forward, for example. Knowing these modifications are also important,

as we can all appreciate that we feel more flexible from day to day, and sometimes with flares we need to go about doing things a little differently than 'usual.'

### **Lesson #3: Stretching is not just for immediately before or after exercising**

Stretching is meant to be a life-long activity to maintain minimal levels of fitness and flexibility.

During the four months that I was undergoing rehabilitation I was not able to go to the gym: the only thing I was able to do were the stretching exercises assigned to me by the physiotherapist. This

*Continued on pg. 7*



## On the Job

### How to talk about with lupus with employers

Continued from pg. 1

Secondly, employers tend to hire by using the following tactics, listed in order of priority: hiring within the company; hiring proven applicants (those connected with current employees); hiring screened applicants (job posting web-sites or employment agencies), and then hiring those who responded to an ad. Kind of along the lines of the first point, potential job seekers tend to use these methods in the opposite order. Most of us try to job seek utilizing the simplest and least time-consuming method, meanwhile employers are seeking employees who utilize the most time-consuming method(s).

Networking is the number one way of finding a job, and from my own experience this is true. The majority of the jobs that I have had were thanks to having internal contacts. Luckily, I have had very few formal interviews. Meanwhile the majority of resumes that I have dropped off at random places of employment have typically gone unanswered. Networking is an ongoing process of developing and

maintaining personal and professional relationships which may result in such benefits as helping others, sharing ideas, information and knowledge, developing friendships, exploring common interests, uncovering possible job opportunities, learning about what other people do. It is a long-lasting mutual relationship where both parties benefit; and is not about asking for a job. Most of us can probably make a

As this all relates to individuals with a disability, we have to even more carefully explore career options, possible employers, and make a decision regarding disclosure of our disability. Thanks to the Canadian Human Rights legislation, we have the right to request accommodations in the workplace, as long as implementing those accommodations does not cause 'undue hardships' to the company. In this in-

**"When considering possible employers, it is best to identify best practice employers, those with enlightened, proactive steps to recruit people with disabilities..."**

decent list of people who are already in our lives who are supportive, with whom we share mutually supportive relationships, and who we plan on keeping in touch with. These are the types of relationships that are considered networking. But, as important as it is to keep in touch with people currently within your network, it is just as important to continue to build your network, especially as your career goal aspirations become clearer.

stance, undue hardships are defined as being too expensive or too hard for the employer to put into place. However, knowing your rights will add to your confidence and prepare you for situations where respect may be lacking.

When considering possible employers, it is best to identify best-practice employers, those with enlightened, proactive steps to recruit people with disabilities (such as federally-regulated employers).



**When disclosing your condition in your workplace, prepare yourself by knowing your rights.**



*It is important to find the right employer that can meet your needs for accommodation.*

Others include organizations that publicize their diversity policies, sponsor community initiatives, have accommodations policies, and have diversity equity officers on staff. This is not to say that you cannot look into jobs available through other types of organizations, others would still be required to provide necessary accommodations; best-practice employers would already have experience with putting accommodations into place and therefore may be more willing to more highly favour your strengths throughout the hiring process.

However, if your disability does not require accommodation, it is not necessary to disclose. Even if your disability is obvious (e.g. wheelchair) the potential employer still cannot ask direct questions about it.

This leads into deciding your own personal disclosure policy. Should you require accommodations, somewhere along the hiring process (from dropping your resume to getting the job offer) you will have to discuss your needs with your employer. Should you not require accommodations, you might still decide to disclose for sake of safety.

A detailed table is attached outlining the different steps of the hiring process and possible pros and cons to disclosing at each of these steps. This table was handed to those of us who attended the workshop at the University of Toronto. However, through my own experiences and through discussing these options with different individuals involved in the hiring process at several organizations, the **two** most highly recommended options is not listed.

The first option includes discussing the accommodations after you have accepted the job offer, i.e. during the signing of the contract. Disclosing at this period in time would take into consideration the fact that you are not legally required to disclose, therein demonstrating that you know your rights. Second, you can be sure that they have hired you based on your ability to perform the job requirements. Third, if at this point they change some previously discussed terms of the contract, they may be liable legally. Fourth, you still have to be prepared to discuss your disability, how it may affect your job performance, and what accommodations you will need to be able to fulfill your role.

To identify the accommodations that you require, you need to have a good understanding of your disability, your strengths and your weaknesses. You also need to:

- understand the job demands
- understand the work environment, including any equipment you are expected to use
- identify the barrier that is preventing you from working optimally
- understand the functional limitations that are preventing or may prevent you from performing a task or accessing your workplace
- identify your abilities and strengths which may assist you in overcoming this limitation
- identify possible or previous solutions
- identify how the accommodation will improve your performance

Tanya Mahadeo, a 27-year-old living with lupus, recalls her experiences when looking for employment.

“When I was offered a job in a law firm, the first thing I did before accepting was tell my potential new boss that I had lupus and that I took multiple medications to control it. I also inquired about whether or not it would be possible to have my benefits kick in earlier than the normal three-month probation period.

“My boss informed me that she would be able to do this for me if I could guarantee her a year of employment with them. Throughout my employment there, I found my boss to be very understanding and accommodating. She was the only person that I told but after three months, I began to tell others.”

The second option is to wait until you need a special accommodation. This second option only applies to cyclical illnesses, such as lupus, where there are periods of illness stability mixed with periods of instability. If your condition is stable when you apply and are accepted for a position, there is no need to legally disclose as you do not need accommodations. However, throughout the course of your employment, your illness may flare and may require you to request accommodations. This is following your legal rights to only disclose when accommodations are necessary. . Also, by not immediately disclosing, your employer

will be able to observe your job performance. Likewise, once you have put enough time into the job, there may be special disability and sick-leave benefits to which you are entitled.

However, in any situation of disclosure, you also have to decide how much information you are going to share with colleagues, and this is more a personal preference than the legal requirements of disclosing to an employer. Likewise, issues of personal safety also need to be taken into consideration. For example, you might choose to disclose to your employer and one colleague you work closely with about how to handle a seizure. To be really discrete, but still ensure your safety you may even just tell some colleagues that you wear a Medic-Alert and that should something happen, you would appreciate their notifying the Emergency Personnel who arrive to help.

As disclosure relates to summer job searching, I have been told that most employers are not as worried about hiring students with disabilities, as they know that after the three to four months of summer contract the student will likely be leaving to return to studies. In my experience, and from what I have been told by employers, although employers are more lenient with hiring summer students with disabilities as compared to hiring regular staff, the same rule tends to apply: only disclose if you need special accommodations.

When considering your personal views of disclosure to a possible employer, you should consider the following:

- Nature of your disability: visible or not?
- Which accommodations are required?
- Will the disability affect the interview process or job performance?
- Can your needs be met without disclosing?

For additional information, feel free to discuss with your network, with the disability office and/or career centre of your school, or to consult the following:

**Books:**

- 10 Essentials to get that job: An employment guide for persons with disabilities
- Employment series for persons with disabilities: Tips for job seekers
- Secrets for success: Profiles of university graduates with learning disabilities
- Speak for yourself: Interviews with students with disabilities
- Taking aim: Job search strategies for people with disabilities

**Websites:**

- [www.abilityedge.ca](http://www.abilityedge.ca)
- [www.enablelink.org](http://www.enablelink.org)
- [www.neads.ca](http://www.neads.ca)
- [www.joininfo.ca](http://www.joininfo.ca)
- <http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/sdd-dds/odi>
- [www.ccrw.org](http://www.ccrw.org)

Time of Disclosure	Advantages	Disadvantages	Issues
<b>On a CV or application</b>	Honesty/peace of mind Lets employer decide if disability is an issue	Might disqualify you with no opportunity to present yourself and your qualifications	You may have a harder time finding work, but usually have no disability related problems
<b>Employer Calls for an Interview</b>	Honesty/Peace of mind Reduces 'shock value' upon initial meeting	May not get interview or receive serious consideration during interview	Without 'shock value' employer may feel more comfortable
<b>Interview: Moment of Meeting</b>	Demonstrates to employer your positive self-perceptions	'Shock factor' that makes employers uncomfortable may have to refocus employer	Employer is distracted by your disability Deal with embarrassment and/or anger
<b>During the Interview</b>	Honest: opportunity to respond briefly & positively in person to specific disability issues Discrimination less likely face-to-face	Puts responsibility on you to handle disability issues in a clear, non-threatening way Too much emphasis on issue indicates possible problems, you are not being evaluated on your abilities	How comfortable are you discussing your disability? Are you too preoccupied with disability? Prepare to answer
<b>Interview – Preoffer</b>	Honesty: Lets employer know prior to offer	Employer may feel person has been less than honest waiting this long	If a person requires accommodations, they need to consider disclosing at this point

## Stretching strengthens the body



Continued from pg. 3

was difficult, and I tested my limits a few times, for someone who usually attends the gym three to four times per week. However, I learned that stretching is really THE most important part of a physical fitness routine. This piece of information is crucial for everyone reading this. At the very least, if you are not able to attend the gym on a regular basis, either due to time constraints or dipping energy levels, stretching regularly is the least that you can do for your body.

Think about it: by stretching you keep your muscles and joints as flexible as possible and it keeps blood flow regular throughout the body. When someone is in the hospital at length, the two things that the staff will encourage are daily walks and daily stretching. Since we now know that all stretches can be modified to fit your physical needs and current level of ability, there is no excuse. Stretching is exercise in itself, is meditative, is relaxing and is easy to incorporate into your day.

The stretches that my physiotherapist assigned are ones that I need to keep doing to prevent further injury (apparently because of the way that my leg and knee muscles intertwine and flex). I often do my stretches either during the evening in front of the television or immediately before turning off the light to go to sleep. The routine helps my body to know that it is bed time and I enjoy feeling myself relax into the stretches. This routine also helps me fall into a deep sleep. I have heard from others that they prefer stretching in the morning to get out the night-kinks and get their day started on a good foot: whatever works for you, your schedule, and your own high and lows throughout daily energy.

Check out some stretching exercise websites and to begin incorporating this important exercise into your daily routine. Just hold each one at least 30 seconds...and breathe!

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/stretching/SM00043>

[http://www.womensheartfoundation.org/content/Exercise/stretching\\_exercise.asp](http://www.womensheartfoundation.org/content/Exercise/stretching_exercise.asp)

[http://www.shelterpub.com/\\_fitness/\\_desk\\_stretches/stretches\\_graphic.html](http://www.shelterpub.com/_fitness/_desk_stretches/stretches_graphic.html)

## Events

### Lupus Fundraiser raises glasses and awareness to finding a cure

BY JENNIFER HUSKA  
CONTRIBUTOR

Recently, along with five other Oshawa Lupus Support Group members, I attended the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Dance For The Cure on Saturday, Jan. 26th. Although it is called 'Dance For The Cure', it is a fundraiser gala aimed at raising money for lupus research AND finding a cure for this chronic illness.

The event was held in Vaughn, Ontario and lasted from 6pm to 1am; the theme was Winter Wonderland, and the decorations clearly showed that off. In the three front foyers was the Silent Auction, in which hundreds of items were available with a wide range of pricing. Items included things such as A Romantic Getaway and A Weekend In Ottawa to Big Mac Certificate to Antique Tapestry. A Live Auction took place during dinner as well, and a lot of good money was raised.

The night began with a Deluxe Antipasto and Oyster Bar, which was full of lots of different types of food. Following the above, several courses followed. There was an amazing pasta course, which included pasta casareccia

with sautéed eggplant and wild mushroom in tomato sauce, and then included with that was a risotto with spinach and arugula. Following that was the main course, which included char-broiled French cut choice veal chop, stir-fried seasonal vegetables, oven-roasted potatoes, and a tossed salad with house vinaigrette. To complete the whole meal was, of course, everyone's favorite part of dinner, the dessert! It consisted of a terrace cup, which was French vanilla ice cream and some fruit around the top, plus a very large fresh fruit platter.

And of course everyone else's favorite part of a dance gala an open bar; make that two – a deluxe bar and a martini bar!

Another big and important part of the night were the guest speakers. The welcoming remarks were presented by Tiziana Tolfo, who was the chair for the Dance for the Cure. Her family began this tradition as just a family Halloween party, and it quickly grew into a beautiful night of benefits and fun.

The master of ceremonies was Barb DiGiulio from The Fan 590. Peter Deeb, President of Hampton Securities offered a few words as well. Other speakers included



*This year's Dance for the Cure successfully raised almost \$200,000.*

established lupus researcher Dr. Murray Urowitz, and Dr. Earl Silverman. Dr. Silverman received the Hope Award for all his hard work as professor of pediatrics and immunology, working as director of pediatric SLE and NLE clinics, and for his well-known work at The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto.

A young teenage boy, Anindya Dey, also spoke of his struggles of learning he had lupus and living in Bangladesh where he didn't receive much help. His parents moved their family to Toronto, Ontario, where they received the much needed attention from Dr. Silverman and his co-workers at The Hospital for Sick Children. He is very grateful and is doing well, thanks to Dr. Silverman.

In the end it was a great night. A whopping \$160,000 was raised and people shared their stories about their struggles and how they are working to raise awareness and funds for lupus. It will be a pleasure to go again next year.



Get in the Loop is a new publication for youth with lupus that strives to connect young people across Canada who are living with this disease. It is organized and published by young people with lupus, in conjunction and with the support of Lupus Canada. The opinions expressed in Get in the Loop are in no way a substitute for advice from medical professionals.

*Lupus is an autoimmune disease that affects thousands of people in Canada, mostly women in their child-bearing years. Symptoms vary greatly from patient to patient and treatment is highly individualized. Patients are urged to contact their physician or health professional with any questions or concerns they might have. Opinions expressed on these pages do not reflect those of Lupus Canada.*

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## Get in the Loop

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## In The Know

### Lupus: It's All In the Family

Researchers have recently discovered new genetic factors that significantly increase the risk of developing lupus, bringing scientists yet another step closer to a cure.

The major finding came from the efforts of American, European, and Scandinavian scientists, whose studies will be published in medical journals *Nature Genetics* and the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

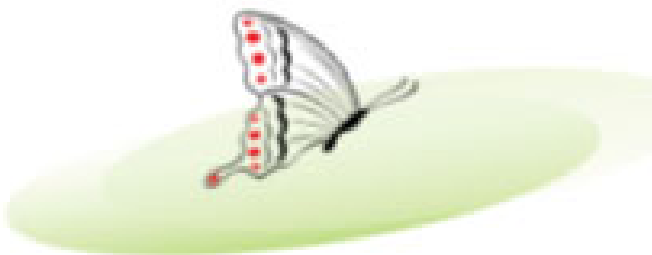
Melissa Alexander, 18, was interviewed by CTV News in late January and talked about her two second cousins who were both diagnosed with lupus (there is an up to five percent chance that lupus is shared between members of the same family).

"To know that research is progressing so much with this disease," said Alexander, "since so little is known about it compared to all of the other serious diseases we commonly hear about, just gave me faith and courage to go on and fight this disease each day."

Alexander is a member of a lupus research study known as the "Apple Study," headed by Lawrence Ng and Dr. Earl Silverman at The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. CTV News reported that this medical breakthrough has the potential to help researchers relieve lupus symptoms or even prevent lupus flares.

### New date for Walk-A-Block

In accordance with World Lupus Day festivities, Lupus Canada has decided to change the date of the Walk A Block to May 10<sup>th</sup>. This means that there are less than 2 months to register and participate. Register online today or support a walker at [www.lupuscanada.org](http://www.lupuscanada.org).



### Living Well with Lupus this May

Lupus Canada and the Canadian Network for Improved Outcomes in Systemic Lupus (CaNIOS) will be holding a Living Well With Lupus Patient Symposium on Saturday, May 31 in Montreal, Québec. Session topics include "Youth to Adulthood – The Transition Years" and "Healthy Eating and Lupus." For more information, or to register please contact Lupus Canada (1-800-661-1468) or see the website for more details ([www.lupuscanada.org](http://www.lupuscanada.org)).