

# HEALTHY CONNECTIONS

EMPOWERING OUR COMMUNITY ONE "BODY" AT A TIME

Wellness Program of the African People's Education & Defense Fund, Inc. March 2004  
1327 Dr. ML King (9th) Street South, St. Petersburg, FL 33705 (727) 821-2437

## APEDF African Martyrs' Day Celebration Pushes Uhuru House Renovation Campaign



Mukasa Ricks speaking at the APEDF African Martyr's Day program Feb. 22, 2004

On February 22, 2004, the African People's Education and Defense Fund sponsored an African Martyrs' Day Celebration, honoring the many Africans who have given their lives in the struggle for freedom for African people worldwide.

Members of the audience looked up to find themselves in the 1960s as Willie "Mukasa" Ricks, former Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) organizer and architect of the slogan Black Power, gave an electrifying presentation.

Mukasa spoke of the strength and determination of everyday black working people facing terror for simply trying to register to vote, demanding

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## Black Stress is Bad for Your Health

By Cassandra Floyd,  
APEDF Wellness Program

Think about how you feel when you get the blue notice that your electric service will be terminated if payment isn't received by noon tomorrow! Or better yet, think about how you would feel if a police officer pulled you over for no apparent reason; all your information is in check, yet there is still a sense of panic.

Remember the time you were going to Burdines, and the girl behind the counter doesn't attempt to help you, but instead stares and then makes a call, all

the time looking at you. "Man, all I wanted to do was buy a nice shirt!" you think to yourself. Anything from sweating a late check in the mail, to the boss who you obviously can't please or get off your back, can invoke feelings of rage, hopelessness, anxiety, or a host of other DEADLY emotions. Yes, deadly!

"It's a hard knock life for us." We as Africans in the US die, on average, a whole seven years sooner than white people. If you are an African man, the number is an astonishing 11 years sooner than white men!! African people in the US suffer extremely

disproportionate death rates of all seven major killers in the country. In case you don't remember, these killers are heart disease, cancer, stroke, liver disease, infant mortality, diabetes, and respiratory disease (AIDS, accidental deaths, and homicide are also with these).

Cancer rates for blacks is 32% higher than for whites, heart disease is 38% higher, liver disease is 77% higher, stroke is 82% higher, diabetes is 132% higher, and kidney failure is 176% higher (National Center for Health Statistics).

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# THE UHURU BASKETBALL TEAM

A Project of the African s People Education and Defense Fund



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2 Below*

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# All People's TyRon Lewis Community Gym



**1327 Dr. ML King (9<sup>th</sup>) St. S.  
St. Petersburg, Florida**

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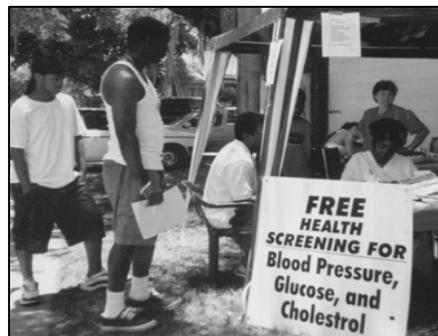
Sat. 8 am - 4pm; Sun. 12 - 4pm

## Third Anniversary of the APEDF Wellness Center African Power Health Fair & Weightlifting Expo Coming June 4 & 5, 2004

On Friday and Saturday June 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, the All People's TyRon Lewis Community Gym will host our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual African Power Health Fair and Weight Lifting Expo in recognition of our 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of serving the African community through the opening of our Wellness Center in 2001.

Improving the health of the African community through building health consciousness and confronting diseases that plague our community is our goal. The annual African Power Health Fair and Weight Lifting Expo will help us reach this realistic goal.

On Friday June 4<sup>th</sup> (place and time TBA) we will have a speak out and seminar on overturning the health contradictions and epidemics in our African community.



Representatives and health professionals from all over the country will give analysis and statistics on the conditions of our people as it relates to health, followed by resolutions and helpful information on what must we do in order to live longer and healthier lives.

The Health Fair will include professionals from various health organizations with information and presentations on diabetes, hypertension, proper nutrition, exercise, holistic healing and much more. You will also have the opportunity to get free health screenings such as diabetes, HIV/AIDS, hypertension, visual/hearing, etc.

Be sure to mark your calendar because this is an event that you will definitely regret missing.

Saturday June 5<sup>th</sup>, we will have our annual power lifting exhibition at the All People's TyRon Lewis Community Gym at 1327 Dr. MLKing (9<sup>th</sup>) St. So. in St. Petersburg. Professional and beginner lifters from throughout the state and country will demonstrate to the community this exciting sport. There will be live entertainment by local artists and a large selection of health food. We will also have on-site health screenings and free health consultations for everyone.

If you would like to volunteer, weight lift, or offer your assistance in your field of expertise, please call Damon at the TyRon Lewis Gym, (727) 824-5670.



# Keys to Successfully Losing Your Stomach

## First of a three part series

*By Damon Reio, Manager,  
TyRon Lewis Community Gym*

For those who are six-pack inclined or lacking a trim waistline and possessing an extra bulge in your abdominal region, it is a deep concern and sometimes an endless battle to lose the fat and build muscle in your stomach.

Compared to other areas of the body, the stomach is usually the last to go, in terms of the fat storage. People often get discouraged when they find that doing extra crunches do not work nor does stop eating altogether.

Although the headline of your favorite fitness magazine may have the guide to getting “a beach stomach in 7 days”, or you may find diet pills that promise you better abs, you will never reach your goal if you do not scientifically understand how your body works, and how should you strategically work your stomach as it relates to your physiology.

In the next three issues of the Healthy Connections Newsletter, we will examine three major components that you should be aware of when trying to sculpt your body or trim your abs in particular.

### **Three Components to Waist Loss**

These three components are eating properly to prevent extra fat storage, burning the fat that is already present, and developing the muscles in your stomach.

Toning your abdominal region is as intricate and delicate as the construction of a clock. In your wristwatch, every piece, from the wheels to the battery is important in order for the hand to move which results in the ability of you telling time. Any piece missing, no matter how small or insignificant it may look, will make the entire watch useless.

Sculpting your abs works the same way. You cannot attain a six-pack if your workout routine is one-dimensional, only consisting of sit-ups, crunches, and other exercises that only develop the muscle. This only gives you a six-pack underneath the fat that you haven't attempted to tackle yet.

At the same time, eating foods that prevent you from trimming your waist will cause extra fat to accumulate around your mid-section. On the other hand, if you were to only cut these foods completely from your diet, eat right, but don't do any cardiovascular exercise or abdominal training; your abs will not

become flat because the muscles are not being toned. The fat that you have already acquired over the past years will simply remain because of the lack of a cardiovascular routine.

Finally, if you have a consistent cardiovascular workout plan, but lack the nutritional and abdominal exercise, your abs still will not positively change. Your cardio routine will be geared to burning the fat and carbohydrates from the foods that you eat; a small portion will be attributed to burning already existing fat that you have.

Over time as your waist-line minimally shrinks, your abs will still be unsatisfactory because the lack of abdominal muscles, used to tighten and pull your stomach in, will still give you love handles with the appearance that you do not train your abs.

Like a clock, or an engine of a car, you have to have all of the necessary pieces and components in order to make your stomach function and look properly.

In the next issue, I will discuss the importance of healthy nutritional eating and why it plays an important role in the transformation of your abdominal region.

## Supplement of the month: Tyrosine

**Feel tired and stressed?** Here's a supplement that may help you perform your best in the gym and at the office. Tyrosine is a so-called nonessential amino acid (meaning that it is produced by the body and need not be obtained through food). It is made from another amino acid, phenylalanine.

There are times in your life when you need more tyrosine than your body can make on its own. Tyrosine key to the production of several neurotransmitters, chemical messengers in the brain that help nerves communicate with each other. Neurotransmitters help control mood, concentration, memory, and learning. Physical and emotional stress can alter the production of neurotransmitters, resulting in physical and mental fatigue.

Numerous studies – including some conducted by the U.S military – have shown that tyrosine supplements taken during times of stress can increase energy levels and relieve the symptoms of mental exhaustion. In particular, studies have demonstrated that tyrosine helps people maintain their mental focus during times of extreme environmental stress, like high altitudes or extremely cold climates. It has been used to treat chronic fatigue syndrome and depression.

Any supplement that fights both mental and physical fatigue is useful for athletes, particularly those in the midst of a difficult training period. Tyrosine isn't going to pump you up, or make you stronger, but it can give you the stamina to work out longer.

Tyrosine should not be used every day, but only when needed. It raises the levels of the neurotransmitter norepinephrine, which is depleted during times of stress. In excess, norepinephrine can raise blood pressure.

### Possible Benefits

- Enhances mental function
- Fights fatigue
- Boosts mood

### How to use it

- Take 500mg. Twice daily, or up to an hour before working out. Do not take tyrosine late in the day- it could keep you up at night.
- Avoid this supplement if you have kidney problems.

## Interval Training: Vary your Intensity to Stay Interested

*By Barbara Odom, Certified Personal Trainer*

Many times cardiovascular exercise can become an agonizing part of your daily workout. Jogging endlessly on a treadmill or continuously stepping up and down on a Stairmaster may become dreadful.

What makes it worse is when you subject yourself to these monotonous activities and you suddenly stop seeing the results that kept you motivated in the first place; you hit a plateau. Interval training is a cardiovascular training technique that may help put the life back into your routine while increasing while increasing your aerobic capacity and accelerating fat loss.

Interval training is simply a method of training that uses varying intensities within a workout. For example, when walking on a treadmill, instead of walking at 70% of your maximum heart rate (MHR) throughout the workout, try walking at 70% of your MHR for 4 minutes followed by 90% every 1 minute. As your aerobic capacity improves, increase the duration of the higher intensity exercise.

Whatever cardio exercise you choose, you can implement interval training. This method of training may also prevent your body from adapting to a moderate intensity workout, inhibiting a plateau.

It is important to stay in your target heart rate (THR) zone in order to not over exert yourself. Also remember to always warm up before you begin your workout and cool down once your workout is complete.

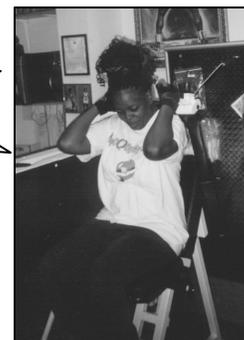
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# Uhuru House Renovation Campaign Event

*(Continued from page 1)*  
equal treatment and an end to segregation. He recalled the names of the leaders in every area, and the names of those heroes who gave their lives in the struggle. Mukasa emphasized that the strength of the working and poor black people is in organization, and that holds true today.

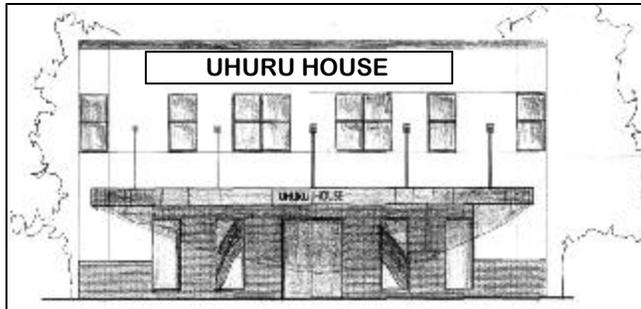
Ricks' presentation was followed by Omali Yeshitela, leader and founder of the Uhuru Movement, who gave a powerful presentation putting the struggles of the 1960s in context with the continuing struggles of today.

The event brought a crowd of nearly 100 people who, after hearing two moving speakers, were treated with a Karamu feast and music from two of St. Petersburg's finest musical groups, Bombai and the Uhuru Band.

This celebration was one of a series of events that will be held to raise donations for the renovation of the Uhuru House. This renovation is an effort to make the Uhuru House a center from which economic development can flow to the African community in the south side of St. Petersburg.

We are building a first class facility that will house an African marketplace where

## Renovation of the St. Petersburg Uhuru (Freedom) House International center hosting critical work and model programs significant to the African world.



Rendering of new facade for Uhuru House, St. Petersburg, Florida

- Larger auditorium with a stage, built-in sound system, and central air/heat
- New full service kitchen
- New facade, parking & landscaping

members of the African community can bring their items and talents to sell at this indoor market. This will help build the capacity for the community to produce our own businesses.

A state of the art recording studio will also be a part of the renovated Uhuru House. This is to address the lack of opportunities faced by many of the talented artist in our community and the exploitation experienced by those who have recording contracts.

Other additions will include a 300-seat auditorium with television monitors, a childcare area and a commercial kitchen. The Uhuru House will also host a Jazz Night, Blues Night and a

Youth Night, which will feature live music from the Uhuru Band among other artists. The facility will also provide a base of operation for a maintenance business and a security business, both of which will be available to be hired out to the community.

The renovation of the Uhuru House is a true vision of economic development, because it creates for the African community the ability to build businesses that bring resources into the community instead of taking resources out of the community.

The initial plans for renovation have been drawn by an architect and are on display at the Uhuru House. We are moving forward with the permitting and funding for the project, and we call on every sector of the community to make your tax-deductible donation to APEDF's campaign to renovate the Uhuru House.

*Make check or money order payable and mail to:*

**APEDF**

*1245 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue South #4  
St. Petersburg, FL 33705*

*All donations are tax-deductible.*

*For more information call:  
(727) 821-2437.*

# Black Stress is Bad For Your Health, Continued from Page 1

## All major killers are either directly or indirectly related to stress

More black men die from heart attacks associated with stress than any other ethnic group in the US. Only black women over the age of 55 are second in their likelihood of dying from a stress-related heart attack. It is important to mention that Africans (all black people) living in America suffer the highest rates of hypertension and death from heart attacks and stroke in the entire world!

Information is the key to overturning these conditions that plague our entire community. We have to have a stake in our health if we want to see our children and grandchildren grow to a ripe age. We of the African Peoples Education and Defense Fund want to give you the education you need to defend yourself and your family against these and other treacherous diseases.

## Reduce Your Risk Factors

The first thing we need to look at is the risk factors most likely to cause illness or death in African people living in the US:

- Obesity
- Smoking
- Drinking and drug use
- Fatty diet (high in saturated fat and cholesterol) and salt intake
- Lack of physical exercise
- Stress
- Untreated high blood pressure
- Uncontrolled diabetes

These are called our controllable risk factors (the ones we may be able to do something about). It is important to know that one of these risk factors can wreak havoc on a black person's health, and two or more is surely signing a death warrant.

## Stress is Underlying Cause

It is important to mention that although stress is considered a factor outside the other factors, stress can be the underlying cause of all of the other risk factors. Consider this: the hormone cortisol, which is released in stressful situations, is now known to be a major cause of obesity and the difficulty of

losing weight. Most addictions (drug use, smoking, alcohol use, and food addictions) are a response to stressful situations, or more so, a way to cope with stressful situations. The development of high blood pressure is directly linked to how the body responds to stress; and diabetes and high blood pressure usually go hand-in-hand. It is a known fact that physical activity is the single best way to deal with stress. There is nothing better than exercise to balance out what stress can do to your body.

## What is Black Stress and How is it Different?

Generally, black stress is the hassle of being black in America! More specifically, research has proven that the effects of stressful events are cumulative, and that if there is a constant cluster of stressful events, it may leave some people especially vulnerable to illness and disease. In several studies done in the late 1960s clearly linking stress and disease, a Dr. Holmes and Dr. Rahe developed a stress scale in which they measured stressful events and how they effected the subjects. For instance, they learned that many widows and widowers die soon after the death of a spouse, and that divorced people are twelve times more likely to become ill with a major disease after a divorce. Now these are not reoccurring events in the average person's life. On average, for a person with control over basic events in their life, there are ebbs and flows of stressful situations, giving the body time to recuperate.

Ordinary life for a black man or woman living in America produces a steady, suppressed anger that many scientists believe is the reason for the explosive rate of hypertension among our people. According to Barbara M. Dixon, R.D., L.D.N., in her book *Good Health for African Americans*, people who have the most control over their lives experience the least stress. She sums it up as the slights of racism, but it can be said that the lack of economic control over one's life and community can be more stressful than enduring a racial slur or a cab passing you by.

While it is true that African people have been conditioned to suppress their anger towards a society that seeks to strangle our community, it is the lack of control over our own lives that renders us disproportionately ill and dead of curable diseases. So anything from sweating a late check to the racist clerk at Burdines is a display of a lack of control of your life that contributes to your steady high levels of toxic stress. The power over your life is in the hands of someone else.

It is important to draw this out because without being able to respond to the stress in your life, it will manifest itself in the form of cancerous tumors in your body, heart attacks, stroke, addictions, and other health problems.

## Respond to Stress Positively

It may seem difficult, but it is very simple. There are many things that are beyond your immediate control, and stress for black people is an inevitable fact of life. But the key is responding positively to stress in your life. Our usual response is food, alcohol, cigarettes, or not to respond at all (which can be just as deadly). Some suggestions made in the book *Good Health for African Americans* are activities such as breathing exercises, a healthy diet, music, yoga, and talking it out. For myself, I often make use of a punching bag, dance in my living room, play with my kid, or laugh out loud.

Another thing that you can do is to participate in organizations that move to change the sociological and economic conditions that are not immediately within your control; to give you and your community the ability to determine what your lives will look like through economic and social control.

The African Peoples Education and Defense Fund is that organization! Fight for real economic development and control of our lives. Join the Wellness or Economic Development committees, volunteer with the basketball team, work at Uhuru Furniture & Collectibles to bring resources to the programs, or join the Uhuru House renovation committee.

Call APEDF at 727-821-2437.

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