

April showers, bring May flowers and right along with all of that...allergies. If you are one of millions affected a great resource is: <http://www.aafa.org>.

Hopefully, April also brings along milder weather so we can get outside and get some fresh air. If walking is one way you strive to keep fit, make sure your feet are well equipped with the correct sneaker.

And finally, with April beginning with April Fools Day— it's no surprise that this month is also National Humor Month. Never underestimate the power of a good laugh.

Wishing you joy and laughter!

April 2011

## Time to Get Outside and Walk-

### Make Sure you Have the Right (and Left) Sneaker!

**The toe** should be wide enough that toes aren't pinched. The shoe should be long enough that your big toe doesn't touch the end. Many walkers buy walking shoes a size larger than regular ones. **The heel** should be flat and relatively straight. You don't need that big, wide, flared heel that some running shoes have for stability, since walkers land with less force.

**Flexibility** is key because walking is a rolling motion, and your shoes need to work *with* you. That means they shouldn't be stiff. Bend the shoe in half and twist it a bit to test its flex. It should give easily.

**The shape** should be a natural curve to facilitate walking's heel-to-toe motion. If you push the shoe's toe down on a flat surface, the heel should rise slightly.

**The cushioning** depends on your foot type. More cushioning increases comfort for someone with a high arch, for instance. If you have any issues with your feet, go to a store that specializes in walking or athletic shoes, and have a fitting expert help you find shoes that will likely work best.

**Keep it personal.** To determine the best shoe for you, a good salesperson will ask about your walking goals (how often, how far, on what surface) and observe your stride length. He or she will look for pronation (whether your foot rolls inward when you walk) and check out your arch type (high, low, flat).

**The perfect match takes time.** Even with expert help, you may need to try on lots of shoes to find the ideal pair. It's worth it. Wear the socks you plan to walk in when you try on shoes. Once you've narrowed it down to a couple of pairs, walk around the store in each one for several minutes (not a few steps). Repeat at home that night -- on carpeting, in case you have second thoughts about your choice or size.

**Worry about the style last.** You want to look good, yes, but *feeling* great during and after your 10,000 steps comes first. Choose the shoe that fits and feels the best.

## April is National Humor Month and Laughter is GOOD for YOUR HEALTH!

- **Laughter relaxes the whole body.** A good, hearty laugh relieves physical tension and stress, leaving your muscles relaxed for up to 45 minutes after.
- **Laughter boosts the immune system.** Laughter decreases stress hormones and increases immune cells and infection-fighting antibodies, thus improving your resistance to disease.
- **Laughter triggers the release of endorphins.** The body's natural feel-good chemicals. Endorphins promote an overall sense of well-being and can even temporarily relieve pain.
- **Laughter protects the heart.** Laughter improves the function of blood vessels and increases blood flow, which can help protect you against a heart attack and other cardiovascular problems.

### Need to speak to an EAP Coordinator?

Call the confidential phone line and leave a message.

Messages are checked at least once a day. **585.245.5740**

Your SUNY Geneseo EAP Coordinators are: Andrea Klein and Michelle Worden

### Local Pollen Counts

The most up-to-date pollen counts for the Rochester area can be found at:

[www.aair.com](http://www.aair.com)

### Allergy Easer? Try Local Honey

A lot of people attest to the power of honey in preventing spring allergies and there is sound scientific basis to it. During spring (May-June), bees flit from flower to flower and collect nectar, inadvertently collecting pollen from the flowers they've visited along the way. The honey that they produce will therefore contain some of these pollen and depending on how the honey is processed after collection, eating this pollen-containing honey will help build a person's resistance.

There are three things to keep in mind, however, for this approach to take effect.

First, commercially produced honey most likely WON'T contain pollen as these are filtered prior to bottling. Honey from small backyard producers are your best bet.

Next, the honey must be locally produced, such that the honey will contain pollen that are common in your area, and are therefore those which you'll have to build your resistance to.

Lastly, you'll probably have to eat the honey all winter long, to build enough resistance for the coming spring. It's too late now— but you can start preparing for next year!

*Earth laughs in flowers.*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

