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About the cover



Jack and JoAnna Jameson, along with their daughters Rose and Alice, look over the lake at Plymouth Bluff. While visiting the bluff you can find nature trails that provide a view of bluff, the lake, the old Tombigbee River channel and more, cypress sloughs and the lake amphitheater. Photos by Deanna Robinson/Dispatch staff

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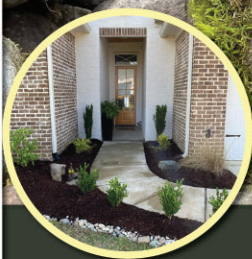
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Why are crape myrtles covered in white scales and turning black?

Bark scale has moved into area over past few years

BY ABIGAIL SIPE
ROCHESTER

arochester@cdismatch.com

B. Jay Nelson first saw the telltale white spots of crape myrtle bark scale only about two years ago on trees near businesses on Highway 45.

As the owner of Bigbee Landscaping and Yard Defense, Nelson has watched the pests spread throughout the city's trees ever since, feeding on the sap of the trees and secreting their honeydew that eventually turns into black, sooty mold.

"It's everywhere in Columbus," Nelson said. "But if your neighbor has it, and you don't think you have it, you probably have it. And you should probably go ahead and ... treat it."

Crape myrtle bark scale is a nonnative felt scale insect that was first detected in the United States in 2004, and first made its way to Mississippi in the spring 2015, according to identification resources available from Mississippi State University Extension Service.

The insects typically become more active at the beginning of the growing season in April and May, Nelson said. They infest crape myrtle trees and lay eggs, which they then coat in a felt scale shell. The female insects congregate around crevices in



Abigail Sipe Rochester/Dispatch Staff

B. Jay Nelson points out the remainder of a crape myrtle bark scale outbreak from the last growing season on a tree at the Roger Short Soccer Complex. The nonnative felt scale insect has moved into the area over the past few years, and Nelson has seen and treated the effects on local trees.

the trees and other thin and damaged parts of the bark, he said, coating the branches and twigs in a white scale that protects hundreds of eggs it lays on the plant.

The inhabiting insects then produce honeydew, Nelson said, which results in sooty mold accumulating on whatever it coats. This can turn parts of the crape myrtle black and prevent the plant from producing as many blooms during the growing season. The female insects can also spread to the surrounding area and plants very easily through the wind or

contact with birds, insects or humans, Nelson said.

Crape myrtles that are healthy and fertilized are less likely to become infested, Nelson said, while those that are stressed or damaged are more susceptible.

"It worked its way all the way down 45 to downtown and took over that parking lot in like a month and a half," Nelson said. "Now, my observation? We had a drought that summer, which causes stress."

Plenty of factors can cause stress on a tree, Nelson said, like a drought or a hard freeze

that can damage parts of the plant. Even scars opened by branches rubbing against each other can cause stress to a crape myrtle and open parts of the bark, making them more susceptible to an infestation.

But one thing that often causes stress for crape myrtles in this area is a bad pruning practice called "crape murder," when a tree owner removes the entire top of the tree during the winter rather than trimming only necessary branches, Nelson said.

"Not only are you destroying the beauty of the tree by doing that, you're helping the bark-scale thrive in that scenario," he said.

Nelson said the best way to control bark scale is through a "systemic insecticide" of the tree, coating the ground around the tree in a drench that the roots can absorb and pull throughout the entire plant. Other insecticide sprays are also available for targeting visible insects, though those require removing the felt scale in order for them to reach the bugs themselves, which can be difficult on larger trees.

While Nelson's outdoor pest control company Yard Defense provides bark scale treatments for crape myrtles, insecticide drenches and sprays effective on the insects are also available for sale in stores.

See **BARK SCALE**, 6



Photo courtesy of B. Jay Nelson

An active outbreak of crape myrtle bark scale from last year's growing season is pictured. Crape myrtle bark scale is a nonnative felt scale insect that was first detected in the United States in 2004, and first made its way to Mississippi in the spring 2015, according to identification resources available from Mississippi State University Extension.

Bark scale

Continued from Page 5

Lowndes Farm Supply stocks the treatments and has been helping local growers navigate infestations. Sales associate Brynn Mathis said even though the crape myrtle growing season begins in April, and bark scale infestations typically ramp up around the same time, the store had already seen about a dozen customers looking to purchase treatments in March.

"We've already seen a lot of it this year, and it's kind of early," Mathis said.

To drench crape myrtle roots, Mathis

recommended a product with the active ingredient imidacloprid. For insecticide and spraying, she recommended products containing mineral oil and bifenthrin, to smother the insects and then kill them.

While the bark scale primarily affects crape myrtles, it can also infest pomegranate, persimmon and fig trees, Mathis said. It can also infest the American beauty berry, Nelson said.

"Don't just limit it to checking your crape myrtles," Mathis said. "Check all

your plants, especially if they're near your crape myrtles."

While some infestations can get out of control and lead to trees needing to be cut down, Nelson said, treatments can often lead to tree recovery. And, he has no doubt that the species as a whole will make it through.

"We're not going to lose the crape myrtles," Nelson said. "People may lose crape myrtles. But as a whole, we're not going to lose the crape myrtles."

Experts advise on getting the most out of landscape lighting

Handy homeowners can take on the challenge

BY CADENCE HARVEY
charvey@cdismatch.com

A bright green glow emanates from a large house on a quiet street, casting an eerie light over the neighborhood. The neighbors can't help but wonder: Why would anyone want this?

"It literally looks like a spaceship has landed in the middle of the neighborhood," said Helen Pridmore, owner of Lighting Unlimited + Uncommon Living. "I feel very sorry for the people who live next door."

While fluorescent green lighting may not be ideal, it highlights the importance of getting landscape lighting just right. Done correctly, lighting experts say landscape lighting can transform a home's security and beauty.

Will Spann, owner of S & S Landscaping said landscape lighting serves two purposes: security and aesthetics.

"Lights on at your house at all times make it safer, and especially if you have high-end landscaping, it really accents your landscape at night," Spann said.

The key to successful landscape lighting lies in choosing the right type and placement of fixtures, Spann said. He advises homeowners to start with path lights, which light a home's

'Certain lights are made for certain places. If you don't know what you're doing, you might end up with lights in places where they don't benefit you.'

Will Spann, owner of S & S Landscaping

walkways, and uplights, which are used to highlight structures like walls and trees.

"I really love an uplight," Spann said. "If I can put an uplight on something, if I can accent a beautiful tree, or... certain areas of the flower bed, that's what I'll do. Then of course, the path lights down walkways I think really show off a home."

Spann explained that placement of lights is crucial, as incorrect positioning can have ineffective or unattractive outcomes.

"Certain lights are made for certain places," Spann said. "If you don't know what you're doing, you might end up with lights in places where they don't benefit you."

Spann, Pridmore and Lighting Unlimited Interior Designer Chase Hazard agreed that a common deterrent for people



Courtesy photo

Owner of S & S Landscaping Will Spann inspects a recently-installed path light at a client's home. Spann said landscape lighting can benefit homeowners by enhancing both their home security and aesthetic appeal. He advises homeowners who are new to landscape lighting to invest in path lights and uplights, which illuminate taller structures like trees and walls.

interested in landscape lighting is the cost.

"The cost is not cheap," Spann said. "It is expensive to have true outdoor lighting versus solar lights you would buy from the hardware store or something."

Spann said the cost of lighting can range anywhere from \$1,500 to \$20,000.

"It really depends on the size of your property and how elaborate you want it," Spann said.

Hazard assured that the investment is worth it in the long-run.

"It can definitely be an investment," Hazard said. "It pays

off because nowadays, with LED lights and integrated LED landscape lighting, everything lasts a lot longer. ... You definitely get what you pay for."

Pridmore said that although they are cheaper, solar lights aren't reliable enough for her to recommend.

"They really haven't perfected the solar-powered yet," Pridmore said. "They are getting better, but they aren't there yet."

For budget-friendly lighting, Spann said homeowners should focus on uplighting front doors and walkways.

See **LIGHTING**, 8

Lighting

Continued from Page 7

“You can do stuff like that, and it is lower budget,” Spann said. “It’s not gonna cost an arm and a leg to do, and you still get the benefits of having lighting.”

Pridmore said that homeowners don’t necessarily need to contract a company to do their landscape lighting.

“Honestly, it is not that difficult to install landscape lighting,” Pridmore said. “If you’re kind of handy then you can certainly do it yourself.”

Pridmore warned that a common issue homeowners face in doing the work themselves is having only one plug for their transformer, which can make it difficult to add lights along the entirety of the home.

“If somebody’s doing a new build, we always tell people to take that into consideration,” Pridmore said. “Either put two plugs in so you can have two transformers, or put a piece of conduit underneath your

‘... Take pictures of the perimeter of your house and what you want to light and bring it into our showroom. Then we can lay it out and tell them where we would put (lights) ...’

Helen Pridmore, owner of Lighting Unlimited + Uncommon Living

concrete so that you can run wire through it.”

Hazard added that installing the lights requires considerable manual labor, including digging trenches and attaching the lights to wiring.

“It’s a lot of manual labor, so people need to be prepared for that,” she said.

“But if you’re willing to put in the effort, it’s definitely doable.”

For those determined to take on the challenge themselves, Pridmore suggested consulting experts before beginning.

“... Take pictures of the perimeter of your house and what you want to light and bring it into our showroom,” Pridmore said. “Then we can lay it out and tell them where we would put (lights), and they can certainly buy the wire and the lights and do it themselves.”

Spann also recommended calling professionals for an on-site consultation before making any purchases.

“We’ll be more than happy to come out and look at it and give you recommendations,” Spann said. “You might spend some money for our time, but we would come out, set stuff out and show you where to place the lights.”



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Elise Hall empowers mothers and moms-to-be through MomBod Fitness company

BY CADENCE HARVEY

charvey@cdspatch.com

As a child, Elise Hall didn't fantasize about the perfect wedding. She dreamed about the perfect home birth.

"That's the kind of kid I was," Hall recalled. "... The husband was always kind of optional in my fantasies."

While her early visions didn't include a traditional career, Hall eventually realized her passion for motherhood could become her life's work.

"Once I became a parent, it was really hard to ignore the need that I saw and the passion that I had," Hall said.

Three years ago, Hall channeled this passion into MomBod Fitness, a company dedicated to supporting women at every stage of motherhood. As a doula, fitness instructor and birth educator, Hall helps women navigate the journey of motherhood from prenatal through postpartum.

MomBod Fitness is based at Redwood Business and Wellness Center in Columbus. Behind a pale blue studio door at the back of the building, a community of mothers move, share stories and laugh with one another.

"... It's nice to be in a community of women who all understand what you're going through," Hall said. "I founded MomBod Fitness because I wanted to empower women to understand and reconnect with



Cadence Harvey/Dispatch Staff

Antoinette Stubbs exercises next to her 3-month-old daughter Erinn Stubbs, while Natalie Woody works next to her 10-month-old daughter Ellie Woody. Artie Llwel, who is 10 months old, plays with a toy in the center of the room during Elise Hall's Kangatraining class March 24. Hall encourages the mothers in her fitness classes and educational workshops to bring along their children.

their bodies through the different stages of motherhood ... and really feel like they can take charge of their journey."

Each week, Hall hosts between seven and eight classes focused on pelvic floor strengthening, preparing for pregnancy and rebuilding strength after birth. In addition to her fitness classes, Hall runs educational workshops grounded in "evidence-based practices" that help women understand and care for their bodies.

"I offer a variety (of workshops), starting with fertility

and prenatal care to help clear up some of the conflicting information out there," Hall said. "I also teach childbirth education, so the delivery goes as smoothly as possible, as well as baby and infant care and development classes."

In November, Hall expanded her services to include doula support, working closely with one client per month. Her doula services include helping mothers develop personalized birth plans, strengthening the muscles needed for labor, setting up baby registries and advocating

for them during delivery. She continues to provide guidance postpartum on recovery and resources including referrals to lactation consultants and therapists.

Hall's transition into this work began with her own challenging experiences as a military wife and expecting mother after a particularly difficult pregnancy with her first child.

"I had him when we were stationed in Germany, so I had no family support at all, and I

See **MOMBOD FITNESS**, 11



Cadence Harvey/Dispatch Staff

From left, MomBod Fitness founder Elise Hall instructs Justine Lllwell and Neila Lllwell on barre during Hall's Kangatraining class while Neila carries 10-month-old Artie Lllwell. Hall encourages mothers to hold their children in a baby carrier while exercising to form deeper bonds between mother and child.



Cadence Harvey/Dispatch Staff

Natalie Woody and Neila Lllwell laugh during Elise Hall's Kangatraining class while holding their babies, Ellie Woody and Artie Lllwell, both 10 months. Hall held Kangatraining March 24 at Redwood Business and Wellness Center in Columbus.

MomBod Fitness

Continued from Page 10

was living in a country where I didn't speak the language. ... I was really lonely and depressed," Hall said. "When I had my daughter, I knew that I wanted to do things differently."

Hall gave birth to her daughter in Columbus in 2021 and began attending baby-wearing fitness classes where she could bond with her baby while staying active. Hall began to collect certificates to become a baby-wearing instructor herself, and eventually she had enough experience to start her own business.

"I just jumped straight in," Hall said. "In Columbus there are a lot of military families who are far away from support, and I just saw the loneliness and remembered

how that felt, so I wanted to empower more parents to be able to get out and still do things that they care about, to meet other parents, to feel more connected and just be able to do the things they love and take care of themselves."

Since then, Hall has worked to create a space where parents can connect with their bodies and feel empowered, whether it's during labor or throughout their daily lives.

Some of Hall's clients, like Stevie Lee Jones, 33, see Hall as more than just an instructor or guide. Jones views her as a friend.

"I like to hang out with her," she said. "She's such a genuine person."

Before she helps clients

breathe through contractions or plan their postpartum recovery, Hall listens.

"I try to start by listening and getting to know the person in front of me," Hall explained. "Not just what they say they want, but also how they interact with their partner, what their personalities are like. That's how I can be most supportive and help them feel like I really care about their journey."

Jones hired Hall as a doula for her second child who was born last month. Jones said Hall was a dedicated listener throughout the entire process.

The most rewarding part of Hall's work, she says, is witnessing the incredible transformation of mothers.

"Watching a baby be born is nothing short of inspiring," Hall said. "But more than that, it's witnessing the journey of the mother from prenatal yoga to the birth, and then seeing them with their baby just weeks later. The transformation is truly beautiful."

Hall continued, reflecting on the resilience of the women she works with.

"I've learned just how strong women are," Hall said. "I see them push through mental and physical challenges every day. It's amazing, but it can also be to our detriment because we're so used to handling everything on our own. I want to make sure women know they don't have to do it alone."



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Cullen Paradis/Dispatch staff

Jamey Rowlet, a construction and weatherization worker for Adam Harmon Construction, sprays loose fiberglass insulation at a Columbus work site near Military Road. Weatherizers can fill any unused portions of the house with roughly 14 inches of shredded tufts of fiberglass, dramatically improving a home's insulation and temperature control.

Get your home ready for summer heat

Local power companies, nonprofits and energy wholesalers offer home energy audits, DIY kits and up to \$5K in rebates

BY CULLEN PARADIS
cparadis@cdspatch.com

It's that time of year again. Spring is in the air, and according to Jon Turner, 4-County Electric's public rela-

tions manager, spring is when he starts getting the most calls from customers shocked by their electric bills.

"You get a bill for something that happened six to eight

weeks ago," he said. "It's 80 degrees on the day I get my bill, but we just had three weeks of sub-zero temperatures. Obviously that's an exaggeration, but in the South it's really the cold that drives high bills. We're not built for (temperatures) under 30 or 40 degrees."

Utility companies across the Golden Triangle are working to make sure customers aren't

blindsided by offering services like daily usage breakdowns, bimonthly updates and flat rate programs. They're also offering options that can slash your energy bill outright by improving the efficiency of your home.

"Weatherization" is a term that covers a wide range of services, but on a fundamental

See **HOME ENERGY**, 16

Home energy

Continued from Page 15

level all of them help a building to keep inside conditions separate from outside conditions. That can mean improving insulation, sealing cracks in window frames, upgrading seals in a building's ventilation and making sure its ventilation grates can close properly in every room.

Columbus resident Terry Ford was having his home weatherized Tuesday by Adam Harmon Construction and Weatherization. Workers caulked air grates, resealed vents and sprayed snowbanks of loose fiberglass insulation into any parts of the attic that weren't being used for storage. Geron Gill, who was loading blocks of insulation into a machine to shred them and spray them out the hose, said weatherization can have a dramatic effect on utility bills year-round.

"People tell us their unit is hard to cool and hard to warm and their electric bill will be \$500 to 600," he said. "It's because their unit is having to work overtime to cool it or heat it. You're trying to cool it you get hot air leaking in, and you're trying to warm it you get cold air leaking in. When it's sealed up and there are no more air leaks so your unit can run at normal speed ... your bill can go from \$500 to like \$200."

Ford said he had been generally aware of weatherization for a long time because of his history in construction, deciding to pull the trigger this year for his own home as warm weather approached.

"In the South, particularly in



Cullen Paradis/Dispatch staff

Adam Harmon, a contractor who's been doing weatherization since 2009, caulked the edges of ventilation grates in a home near Military Road. The Tennessee Valley Authority, who provides wholesale energy to many local utility companies throughout Mississippi, offers customers up to \$5,000 in rebates to help pay for weatherization work by accredited contractors.

the summertime, we really have some issues cooling homes," he said. "Insulation will certainly be a help with that."

He got some help from the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Golden Triangle's largest energy wholesaler. TVA partners with local utility companies not just to sell them electricity but to run education and assistance programs for customers.

TVA maintains a list of accredited contractors in its coverage area, allowing customers to go online at energyright.com and find workers in their area that meet the company's standards.

It also offers up to \$5,000 in rebates on a range of weatherization work to single-family homeowners served by partic-

ipating utility companies like Columbus Light and Water, Starkville Utilities and 4-County Electric.

When an applicable job is completed by one of TVA's accredited contractors, the contractor can submit the customer's information to TVA. If everything checks out and the customer is in a covered area, the TVA will reach out with the rebate. A full list of rebates and more details can be found on TVA's website, with even larger incentives available for businesses.

"That made it a lot easier to make the decision," Ford said. "I'm as cheap as the next guy, and I feel like (the insulation) will pay for itself. Electricity costs go up a little bit every

year and anything you can do to use a little less certainly should help your utility bills."

Other options

Another option for financial assistance in weatherization is Prairie Opportunity, a community aid nonprofit based in Starkville. It maintains a weatherization department with jurisdiction across the entire Golden Triangle and beyond, offering weatherization services to homeowners of low income if they're elderly, disabled or have children under 18.

The EnergyRight program has a DIY home energy assessment for those that aren't sure what work their home might need. Customers can go through the online survey, and by the end the website will have a list of upgrades your home could accommodate to improve its efficiency. Those who take the survey can also enter their mailing address at the end to have TVA send them a free home energy kit with items like LED lightbulbs and weatherstripping to seal doors.

Individual utility companies can offer unique programs. 4-County, for example, keeps dedicated home efficiency surveyors on staff that customers can request for a professional home audit. 4-County customers can also just request a DIY home energy kit without completing the survey.

CLW and Starkville Utilities are both organizing energy workshops this spring where customers can come in to learn about energy-saving techniques.

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Emma McRae/Dispatch Staff

Resident Yvonne Key talks Wednesday about one of many house plants in the rotunda of the Arrington Assisted Living Community at the Pointe Retirement Community. House plants that require little maintenance, like pothos and philodendrons, are a good option for residents who want to keep gardening after moving into a facility.



Emma McRae/Dispatch Staff

Arrington Assisted Living Community at the Pointe Retirement Community resident Carolyn Moore tends to one of the plants Wednesday inside the Arrington. Studies have found adding plants to assisted living facilities can have a positive impact on residents, stimulating their senses and creating an opportunity to have a purposeful hobby.

Retirement home residents find comfort, purpose in gardening

How to pick the perfect house plant for your loved one

BY EMMA MCRAE
emcrae@cdipatch.com

Bringing a simple plant into a room can add color and life in more ways than one.

At Trinity Place Retirement Community, one resident spends her days tending to her flower-filled patio, watering purple blooms and fending off squirrels. For her and others, plants go beyond decoration and provide a sense of purpose and home.

Adding plants into their space can help residents maintain a sense of normalcy after they stop living independently, Trinity Director of Marketing Rhonda Richardson said.

“It brightens their day, and it gives them

purpose, especially if that was their hobby,” she said. “We don’t want to stop doing the things that we love. That’s their hobby, and you need to allow them to keep doing what they’ve always done and what they enjoy because that keeps them thriving.”

Studies show that keeping plants in assisted living facilities can stimulate residents’ senses, create positive emotions and provide a rewarding, purposeful activity. One study in particular, published in an American Society for Horticultural Science journal, found residents went from a state of “lonely dependence” to being more active, socially connected and responsible for something other than themselves after taking a weekly gardening class at their facility.

Richardson said several residents at Trinity have kept their passion for plants alive, tending to them just as they did

before moving in. Caring for plants can return a sense of purpose to residents when they’re feeling disconnected, she said.

“When they get to a certain age, some can tend to lose their purpose and think that they have nothing else to offer, and that’s not true,” she said.

At the Arrington Assisted Living Community at the Pointe Retirement Community, Administrator Ken Phillips said plants both inside and outside the facility help keep residents’ spirits high, especially as springtime comes around.

“We’ll start seeing some family coming up here and putting hanging plants on little shepherd’s hooks outside windows and things like that,” he said. “It just adds that other dimension to their life.”

Aside from their own house plants, Phillips said residents also have access

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Gardening

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to raised-bed gardens to enjoy when the weather is nice, an addition he said residents with dementia in particular have enjoyed.

“For most of them, it’s probably something they did living on their own, having plants inside and out,” he said. “It’s almost like an activity of daily living to them still. ... It’s just a part of life. We like doing it, and I’m sure the residents enjoy it.”

When it comes to choosing a plant for a loved one’s room, Alana Unruh, a manager at Busy Bee Nursery in Macon, said there are a few questions you should ask before picking out a plant. The most important thing, she said, is determining how much light plants will have.

“First of all I would decide if you’re going to be able to put it by a window,” she said. “I feel like light is going to be one of the main issues. Is it going to be medium light? It is going to be like low light? That’s going

to make a difference on what you can get to put in the room.”

Unruh said there are plenty of plants that require minimal maintenance as long as they have adequate light. Pothos and philodendrons are great low-maintenance options, she said, while *Zamioculcas zamiifolia* – also known as ZZ plants – are an even easier choice.

“The ZZ plants are low light, low water, so you don’t have to care for them a lot, and they just survive,” she said. “They have naturally glossy leaves too, and they’re not going to grow crazily out of control.”

Doris McClusky, a resident at Trinity Place Retirement Community, stands outside of her front door, where she has planted a variety of plants and flowers on her patio. Using plants to decorate residents’ spaces in assisted living facilities can help improve their quality of life, adding a sense of purpose and maintaining a sense of normalcy, Trinity Director of Marketing Rhonda Richardson said.



Courtesy of Trinity Retirement Community

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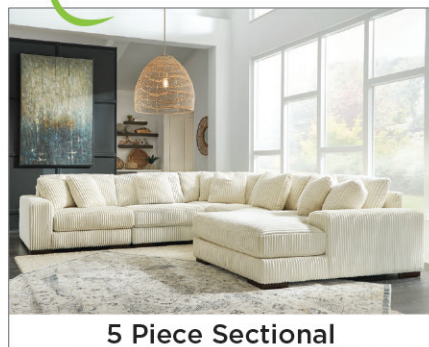
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When should you eat? Before, after – or even while – exercising?

BY ALBERT STUMM

The Associated Press

AND CADENCE HARVEY

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If you listen to some self-proclaimed exercise experts on social media, they swear that working out on an empty stomach burns more fat.

But it's a common misconception that exercising in a fasted state improves performance or burns more calories, said Abby Langer, a dietitian in Toronto.

"The research shows that in terms of gains, it doesn't really make much of a difference," she said.

Andres Duenas, an outpatient dietician at Baptist Memorial Hospital in Columbus, said fasting before exercise doesn't yield many benefits.

"It does not lead to further calorie loss ... so I wouldn't really say fasting before exercise has much benefit besides some people just feel better," Duenas said. "... If you feel comfortable doing it, sure go for it, but we also want to make sure you're fueling properly throughout the day to make up for that."

Does that mean you should load up on protein and carbs right before a workout? No, that's not true either.

What's the case for eating before exercising?

The calories in food literally are energy, so you need them to fuel your body for a proper workout. Eating too much too soon beforehand, though, can be problematic.

Exercising diverts blood from organs including the stomach to the muscles, said Langer, author of "Good Food, Bad Diet." So exercising on a full stomach affects the digestive process, which could cause cramping or even make you feel sick.

That's particularly the case with meals



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A plate with grilled salmon, roasted sweet potatoes, and a side salad, showcasing the importance of healthy fats and carbohydrates for muscle recovery

high in fat, protein or fiber, which take longer to digest than carbohydrates. Langer recommends eating a high ratio of carbs beforehand and waiting two to three hours before intense exercise.

Duenas recommends eating a carb-heavy meal around two hours before intense exercise.

"I would say maybe two hours prior would be the last time you should have a full meal," Duenas said. "You'd still want it to be very complex with carbs, fiber... all the good stuff. I still wouldn't say more than a quarter of your plate should be proteins, just to allow more space for the carbs."

Duenas said that what someone chooses

to eat depends on their goals.

"Let's say you're a college athlete, and your goal is to perform at your highest level," Duenas said. "I would say 33% to maybe even half your plate should be carbs ... a quarter of it would be protein, and then the rest would be veggies. ... If you are someone trying to lose weight, it would be half your plate veggies (and) fruits, quarter plate carbs, quarter plate proteins two hours before."

If you exercise first thing in the morning or before dinner, it's OK to have a carb-rich snack like a banana with peanut butter or yogurt with fruit beforehand. It will give you the energy to perform well,

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and you can fuel up afterward with a full meal.

That steak may serve you better afterward because that's when a higher ratio of protein is easier to digest, said Krista Austin, a physiologist in Colorado Springs.

Austin said if it will be an hour or longer before you can have a full meal, it's better to have a high-protein snack in the meantime to help curb your appetite. The reason has little to do with muscle recovery or nutrient absorption: Rather, people who are too hungry make poor dietary choices.

Duenas said the time someone should eat after a workout depends on when they ate before.

"If you ate something substantial, maybe two hours before a workout, then you can probably wait two hours after a workout to actually consume a full meal," Duenas said. "For the meal itself, we do want to focus on good, balanced nutrition, complex carbs, fibers, very vegetable and fruit heavy, a good lean protein or even ... fatty fish like salmon, trout, mahi-mahi."

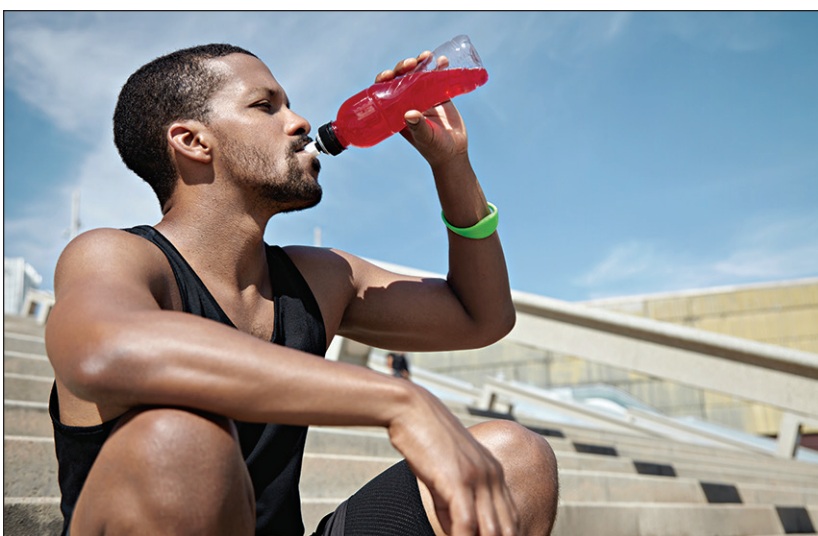
But it's another myth that you need to grab a protein shake within minutes of finishing to build the biggest muscles, Langer said.

Many exercise enthusiasts point to what's known as an "anabolic window" of about an hour within exercising that the body is primed to repair muscle. For the average person, you have a much longer window, and nutrient timing



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Two female friends in the gym eating fruits and taking a break from their workout.



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A runner is refreshing and quenching his thirst with juice after a workout.

is less important than making sure you consume some protein at every meal, Langer said. The body needs a continuous supply

of amino acids like protein for muscle repair and maintenance, she said, which means about 25 to 30 grams at every

meal, depending on various factors.

How about eating during exercise?

Most people who are eating enough throughout the day don't need anything during a workout. Duenas said whether or not someone should eat during a workout depends on the type of activity they're doing.

"If you're doing maybe an hour of weightlifting where you have good rest in between ... you might not need it," Duenas said. "If you're training for a marathon and you're at the hour mark, it definitely could be beneficial to have some simple sugar intake ... a gel or maybe some juice."



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How much sleep do you really need? Experts say it depends

BY DEVNA BOSE

AP Health Writer

AND EMMA MCRAE

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Chances are, if you're reading this, you got some sleep last night. But are you feeling rested?

Experts say it's an important question to consider.

Most of us spend a third of our lives sleeping, but you may need more or less than eight hours a night. The number of hours needed changes throughout your life, with babies and kids needing more sleep and people 65 and older able to function on slightly less than seven to nine hours.

Here's what sleep scientists and doctors say about how much you really need – and whether your gender plays a role.

Sleep quality over quantity

Sleep is still a mystery, despite how critical it is for our health.

"The reasons aren't entirely clear, but it's an essential thing that we all do," said Dr. Rafael Pelayo, a sleep specialist at Stanford University. "Something remarkable happens when you sleep. It's the most natural form of self-care that we have."

For some, the cause of poor sleep could be connected to undiagnosed sleep disorders. Leslie Albright, director of



A woman is sleeping with a CPAP machine, which is used to treat sleep apnea.

respiratory therapy at Baptist Memorial Health-Golden Triangle, said the most common treatment her team implements is continuous positive airway pressure, or CPAP, therapy for sleep apnea.

"(Sleep apnea) wakes you up, and your brain basically forgets to breathe," Albright said. "Your oxygen levels can drop. It can affect your heart. And then, it does wake you up in the night, so you get very poor quality

sleep."

That poor quality sleep, she said, can translate into a poor quality of life once the sun comes up.

"You wake up in the morning feeling unrested," Albright said. "People have morning headaches, a lot of daytime fatigue, falling asleep while driving or in common places – things like that."

Most of the population gets between seven to nine hours

– and that particular category has the lowest association with health problems, said Molly Atwood, a behavioral sleep medicine clinician at Johns Hopkins.

Once people either dip into less than six hours of sleep or get more than nine hours on average, the risk of health problems inches up, Atwood said, but everybody is different.

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Sleep

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How much sleep we need changes

The amount of sleep we need changes throughout our lives. Newborns need the most – somewhere between 14 to 17 hours.

The National Sleep Foundation recommends most adults between 26 and 64 get between seven to nine hours of sleep. People who are 65 and older can get slightly less, and young adults between ages 16 and 25 can get slightly more.

Humans cycle through sleep stages roughly every 90 minutes. In the first portion of the night, Atwood said that more of the cycle is slow wave sleep, or deep sleep, which is essential to repairing and restoring the body. It's also when "growth hormone" is released.

In the latter hours of the night, more of the sleep cycle is spent in rapid-eye movement sleep, or dream sleep, which is important for learning and memory consolidation, or the process in which short-term memory gets turned into long-term memory.

Kids get more "deep sleep," with about 50% of the night in that realm, she said. That drops at adolescence, Atwood said, because our body doesn't need the same kind of repair and restoration.

Do women need more sleep than men?

Research doesn't show that women need more sleep – but women do get slightly more sleep on average than men, Atwood said.

It starts at a young age. Though they have the same sleep needs, teenage girls seem to get less sleep than teenage boys, Pelayo said. Additionally, teenage girls tend to complain of insomnia more frequently.

When women become first-time mothers, they often care for newborns throughout the night more frequently, which means less sleep, said Allison Harvey, a clinical psychologist and professor who studies sleep at UC Berkeley.

Hormones may also impact women's sleep quantity and quality during pregnan-



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Woman with insomnia.

cy and menopause.

Atwood said women may also need more sleep right before their menstrual cycle.

Albright said her team treats men more frequently for sleep apnea than women often because of differences in anatomy.

"Anatomy, the way your airway is built, the way you were born can affect whether or not you're at a higher risk for having sleep apnea, and so a lot of time men – having a bigger neck girth – can be more susceptible for it," she said. "But we see a lot of women who have sleep apnea. Weight has an effect on that as well."

When to seek help sleeping

You'll know if you're not getting enough sleep if you're feeling grumpy, irritable and inattentive. Long-term, those minor symptoms can become serious problems – even deadly.

"If you're not getting enough sleep or you have untreated insomnia or sleep apnea, your risk of depression increases," Atwood said. "Your risk of cardiovascular issues like high blood pressure, risk of heart attack and stroke increases. Your immune system is compromised. You're at greater risk for Alzheimer's."

Aside from the day-to-day struggles of getting poor quality sleep, Albright said untreated sleep apnea can result in a range of negative, long-term side effects.

"Low oxygen levels can affect your brain, and then of course, it increases your risk for heart failure and other issues with your organs and daytime performance," she said. "Overall, every person needs an adequate amount of sleep to reset and recharge and just rest their bodies and their minds and be able to function properly the next day."

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