

HEALTHWIRE

GOING NATURE'S WAY

H E A L T H

PART I

By Candy Hamilton

Scientists and science teachers are teaching far beyond test tubes and textbooks to encourage more people to enter the scientific field. Moreover, Native American, African American, Asian and Latino scientists working in the fields of environmental science and policy recognize the important role outreach, recruitment, and youth programs play in developing the next generation of environmental specialists.

Though minority professionals are under-represented in all areas of science and technology, the growth of environmental

racism in America has created a special need for culturally sensitive and aware experts in the world of environmental policy and science. Through summer and internship programs, students can begin early for a career in environmental work.

Misty Brave grew up in Pueblo, Colorado, and the time she spent in the Rockies reinforced her Lakota sense of belonging to the earth. A science teacher at Little Wound High School on the Pine Ridge Reservation and a former Christa McCauliff fellow (a U.S. Dept. of Education fellowship for teachers), she now sits on the Christa McCauliff Board of Directors. In

the summer of 1992 she helped coordinate the American Indian Science and Engineering Society's (AISES) environmental teaching camp in Boulder. Brave encourages her students to attend summer programs like those offered by AISES. "Science isn't a nine-month study. Get involved. Look around you. Use your powers of observation more. Kids are doing more of that now. The culture is there. There's a yearning in them," Brave says.

Meteorologist Warren Washington founded Black Environmental Science Trust (BEST) in Boulder, CO to encourage young African Americans to enter environmental science fields and to focus attention on small communities working on local environmental problems.

Through BEST, Washington hopes to set up training grants and research on environmental issues that affect low income communities and offer African American people with opportunities to learn about environmental issues in their lives.

Washington, who works in climate and global change, notes that of the scientists involved in this field, fewer than one percent are African American. "It was clear there were impediments to getting into the field," he says. "Here was a problem I have expertise in and I thought I could help. We all ask ourselves 'what can I leave for the next generation?' For students and science, I can make sure the baton is handed on."

Even before BEST, Washington was inspiring students. Fifteen years ago Dr. Denise Graves, then a student at Spellman College in Atlanta, G.A., heard Washington speak and found her role model. She went on to get two masters degrees and a doctorate and has worked at NASA as a research scientist and at AT&T Bell labs, where

she designed underwater listening systems. Now at Atlanta University, she is designing a program in environmental science for the January 1994 semester.

According to Dr. Graves one of the reasons for so few minorities in environmental careers "is the number of minority students unaware of careers in environmental work.

The [Atlanta University program] will increase their motivation and awareness," she says. She advises high school and

college students interested in environmental work to concentrate on biology courses and physics.

Dr. David Scott at Saskatchewan Indian Federated College in Canada, and Gregory Cajete, an environmental educator and the founder of Tewa Educational Consulting in Espanola, N.M., have designed a nine course program based on a Native viewpoint of earth and science.

"Too many science educa-

tion people alienate Native students because of a lack of cultural relevance in the material and the approach. Yet Native students have a predisposition for the work," Cajete says. "The standard science curriculum tunnel vision. That's the main reason there aren't Indians in the environmental area," he adds.

To Be Continued.

Candy Hamilton is a freelance journalist living in Oglala, South Dakota.

ATTENTION LUNG PATIENTS

The Better Breathers Club will hold its monthly meeting on Wednesday, August 18, 1993 at 1:15 p.m. in the Parish Hall, Christ Church Episcopal, 2000 S. Maryland Pkwy.

Ruth DeHan, R.S.V.P. will be speaking on Medicine Misuse. Sponsored by the American Lung Association of Nevada, the Better Breathers Club is an educational and emotional support group for lung patients and their families. There are no dues or membership fees.

For more information, contact the American Lung Association of Nevada at 454-2500.

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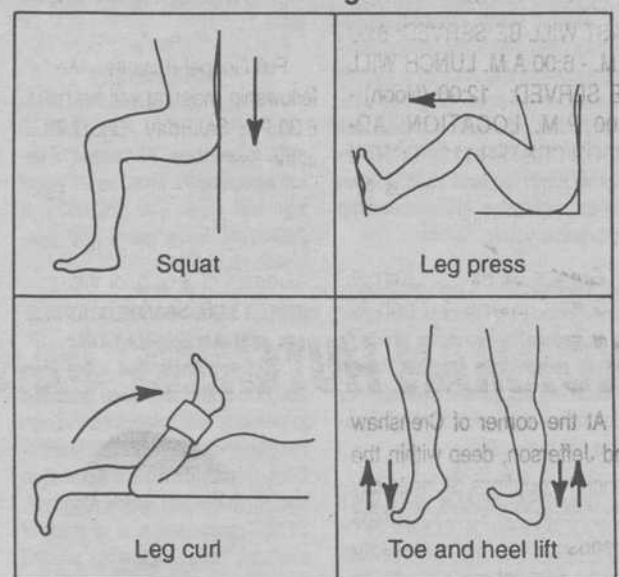


Illustration by Baylor College of Medicine in Houston

HOUSTON — Many common knee injuries can be avoided if athletics would properly condition the joint.

"The knee is like a mechanical device," said Dr. David Lintner, an orthopedic surgeon at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. "It can stand only so much wear and tear without proper maintenance."

Conditioning should include strengthening and flexibility exercises for the muscles that provide support around the knee.

Well-conditioned muscles can withstand more of the pounding that knees absorb during running and jogging. Conditioned knees also stand up to more of the slashing and jumping movements typical in many sports such as basketball, racquetball and tennis.

Common injuries in these sports include strains and sprains, which can take several days or weeks to heal. In more severe injuries, ruptures of the ligaments, tendon, cartilage or muscle around the knee could require surgery and weeks or even months of recovery time.

Lintner recommends developing both strength and flexibility in the quadriceps and hamstrings, the muscle leading down the legs and around the knees. He also suggests building

strength in the gluteus muscles which add support to the hips. This improves balance to decrease the risk of serious falls or knee-twists.

A good way to begin increasing strength in the legs and hips is by doing squats. This is an easy exercise that benefits overall leg strength.

Place the feet 18-24 inches from the wall and lean so the back is flat to the wall. Hold, and slide back up.

Lintner says leg presses using weights also strengthen the legs while providing variety in an exercise routine. Using a weight machine, the weights are pushed away from the body with

the feet while in a sitting position on the bench press.

Another good weight exercise is leg curls. A weight is strapped to the ankle and the leg is bent at the knee until the heel touches the buttock. This can be done while laying flat on the stomach.

Some people make the mistake of relying heavily on knee extensions, another weight-bearing exercise. The leg dangles off a bench and lifts upward at the knee.

"This exercise can be beneficial, but can also do harm then good because the kneecap can become irritated," Lintner said. (See Knee Injuries, Page 25)

STRESS MANAGEMENT SEMINAR

The Doolittle Senior Management, 3333 W. Washington Ave., hosts a free seminar on Stress Management at 1:30 pm, Monday, August 23. Presented by Jennifer Martinsen, Health Educator with EHP Health Care, will present the seminar, providing participants with increased awareness and understanding of the good and bad news regarding stress.

Participants will learn techniques of lifestyle management, motivating them to modify habits that will help them achieve a higher level of wellness.

This seminar is designed for seniors 55 and older, and sponsored by the City of Las Vegas. Call 229-6601 to register.