



Your Amazing Body

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Cannonball!!!

As a kid, I spent most of my summer, along with every other kid in town, at the public pool. It was only a block away from my house and it was awesome! There was a good size baby pool, but from as long as I can remember I spent my time in "the big pool," which seemed enormous to me as a kid! It had a shallow end (3 feet deep) with a great big fountain in the middle and then gradually got deeper and deeper before being roped off to separate it from the "deep end" which was 10 feet deep!

When I was 8 or so, I was able to play on my own with my friends at the shallow end. We used to love to swim out to the middle where the fountain was and then stand underneath it, holding our breath like we were taking a shower in it. By the time I was 10 or 12, we would have races across the pool where it was 4 or 5 feet deep. Sometimes we would swim on top, but we'd also race under water too. By the time I was a teenager, we would jump off the side in the deep end and see who could touch their toe on the bottom and get back to the top first.

The deep end also had diving boards, two smaller boards, and one high dive between them. It was fun to race off of them or to see who could make the biggest splash. Of course the perennial favorite of splash makers was the cannonball!!! In fact, no matter how old I was or what end of the pool I was playing in everyone always loved the cannonball!! You could do it off a diving board or just by jumping off the edge into the pool whether you were at the shallow end, the deep end or somewhere in between.

All that fun, and especially the cannonball, requires that you be able to hold your breath and that is a fascinating ability that we all have. Breathing is very important for life of course, and despite the fact that you rarely think about it, you do it again and again, around 20 times per minute and nearly 30,000 times per day.



Photo Courtesy/Achilles - Dreamstime

When you breathe, you take oxygen from the environment into your lungs. Once in your lungs, your body takes that oxygen and infuses it into your blood. Then your heart pushes your blood with the oxygen all throughout your body to every cell, tissue, and organ. In this way, your body is constantly nourishing every part with the oxygen it needs to be healthy.

One of the best things you can do to keep this process working at its best is exercise. This keeps your lungs in good shape and keeps the oxygenated blood pumping to every part of your body. Holding your breath, like when you are swimming, is also a good way to give your lungs a workout. Because you don't think about it, breathing is an involuntary function, and those functions are controlled by a specific part of your nerve system. Your nerve system controls it so you don't have to think about it!

For this reason, it makes sense that another great thing to do to insure that your lungs work at their best is to make sure your nerve system is working at its best. Your chiropractor can help you with that. Having your spine checked regularly by your chiropractor may result in the best cannonball splashes ever!!! Now who would have thought of that!?! Happy Summer everybody!

- Judy Campanale, DC, ACP, FCSC (hon)

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