From H_2O to Wooder: Communicating the Science of Water



American Water Resources Association Conference
November 11, 2026

Elizabeth Koniers Brown
Director of External Affairs and Communications

Delaware River Basin Commission
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The Delaware River Basin Commission is a federal-interstate government agency



Our Mission

Manage, protect, and improve the water resources of the Delaware River Basin.

Our Vision

Provide trusted, effective, and coordinated management of the Basin's shared water resources.

Our Foundation

The Delaware River Basin Compact is an agreement, federal law and state law.

The Delaware provides drinking water, recreation and economic opportunity to millions



Communicating the science of water

Keep it concise

Make it clear

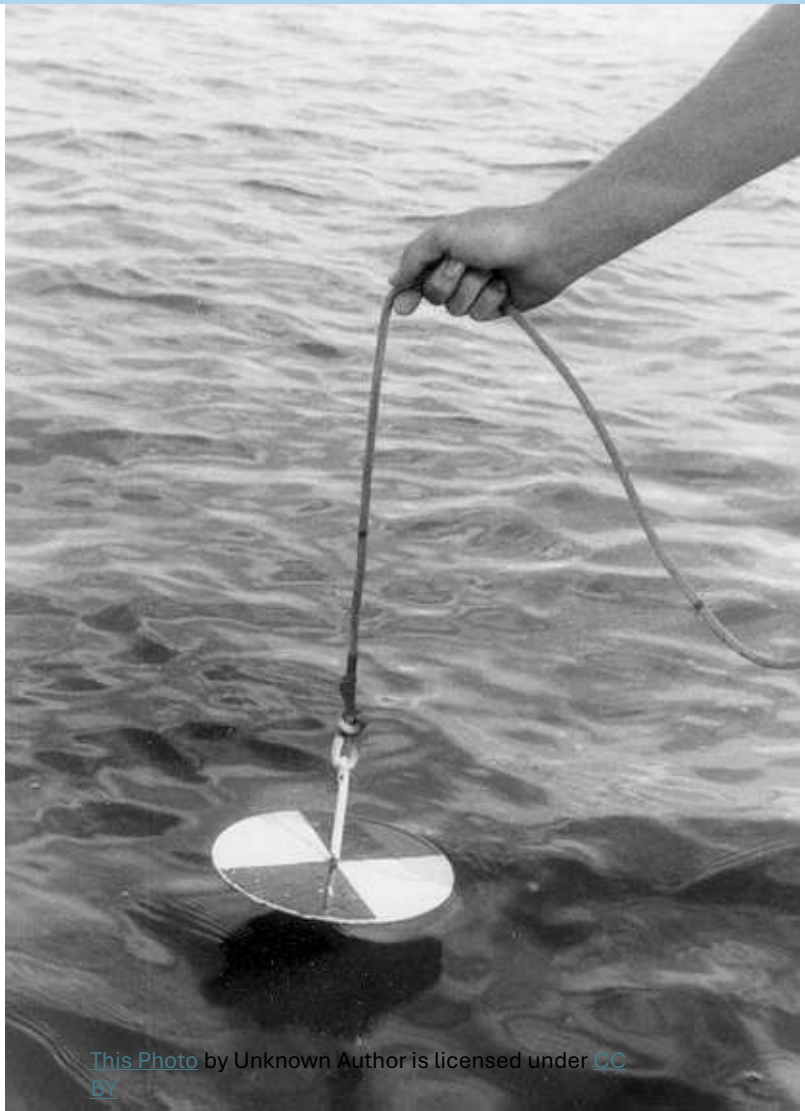
Get confirmation

Clear and concise water communication helps banish loneliness



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Clear and concise water communication grows the value of your water work



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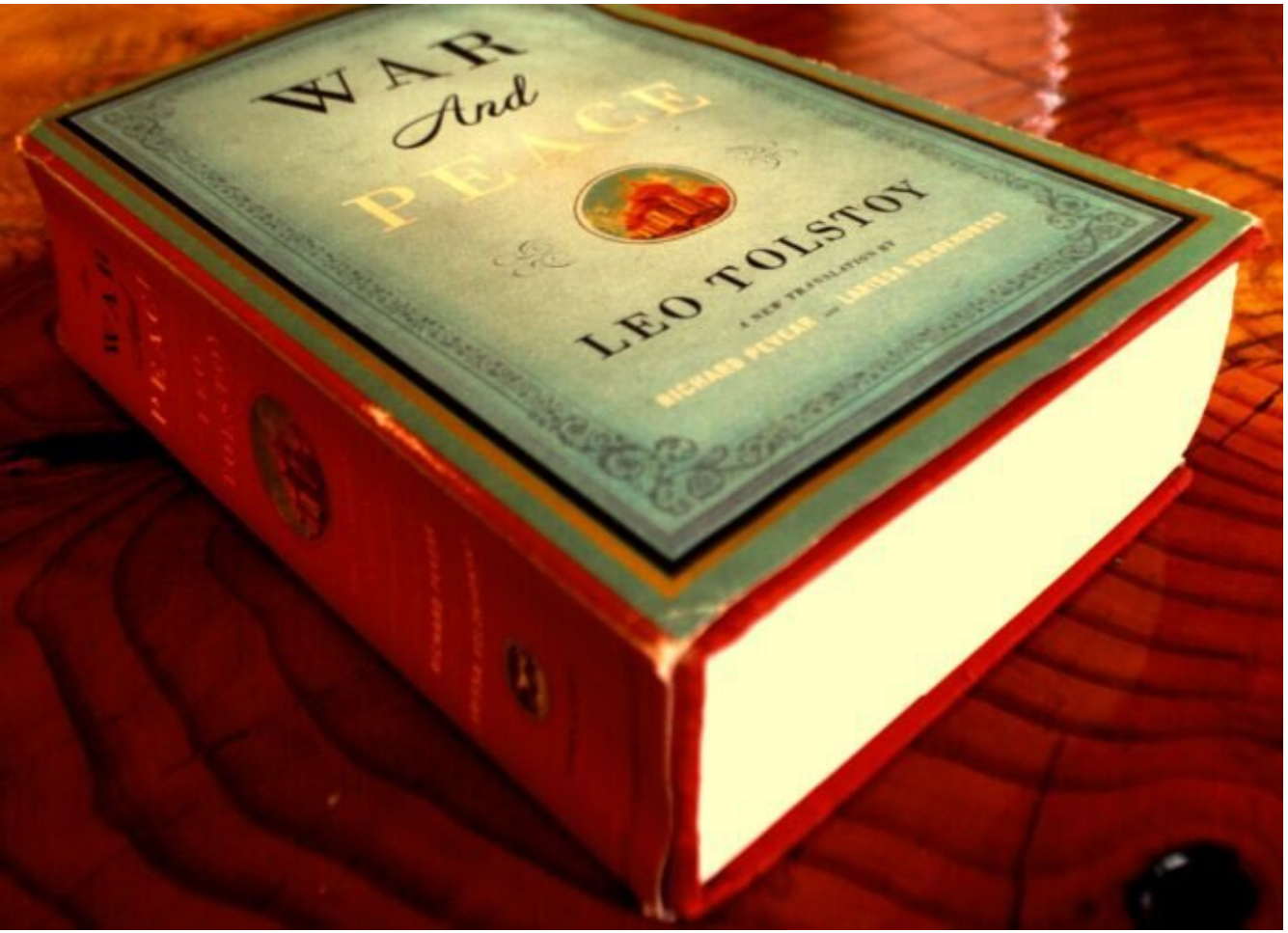
Communicating the science of water

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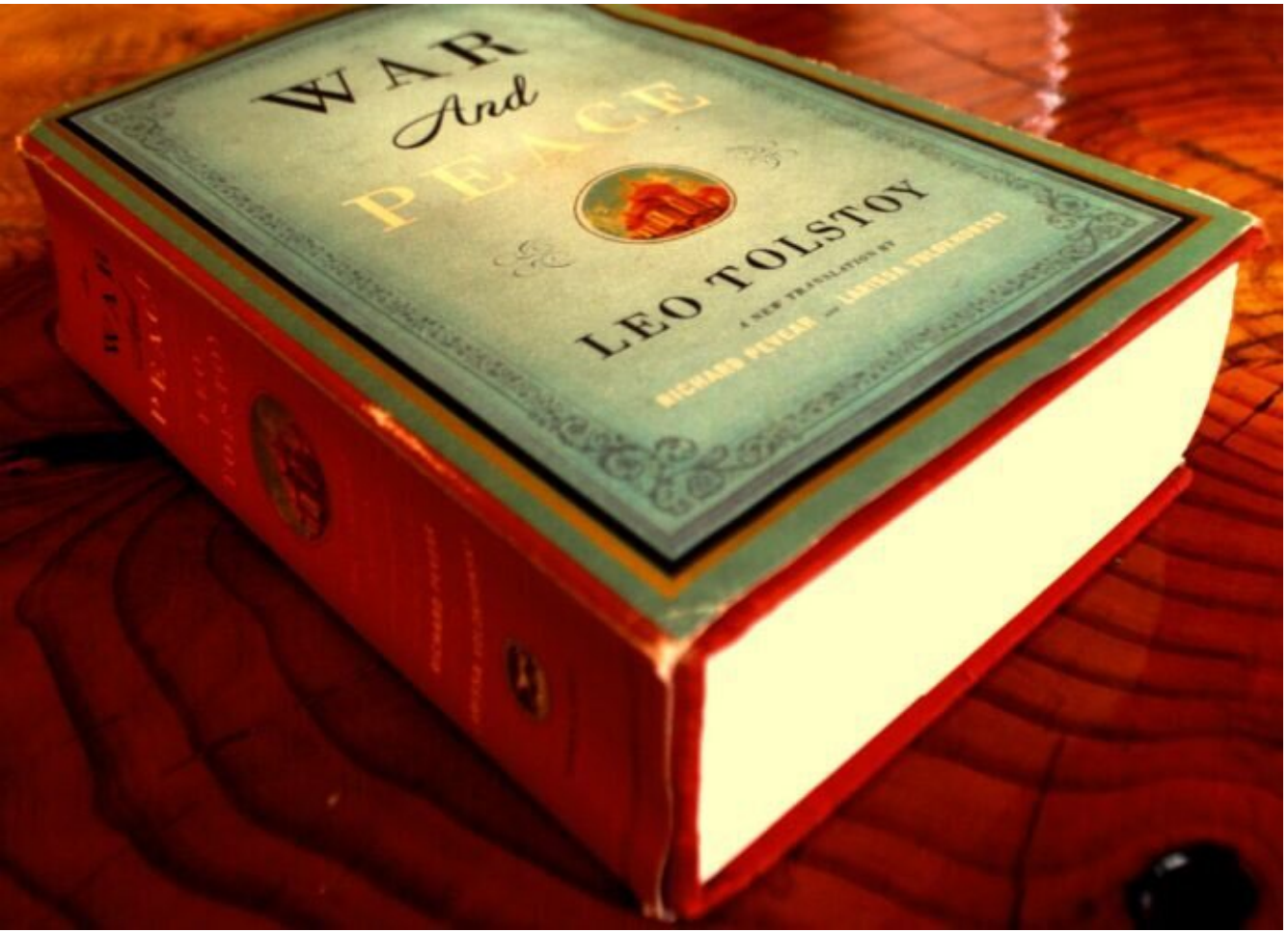
Just tell me what I need to know



- TL;DR

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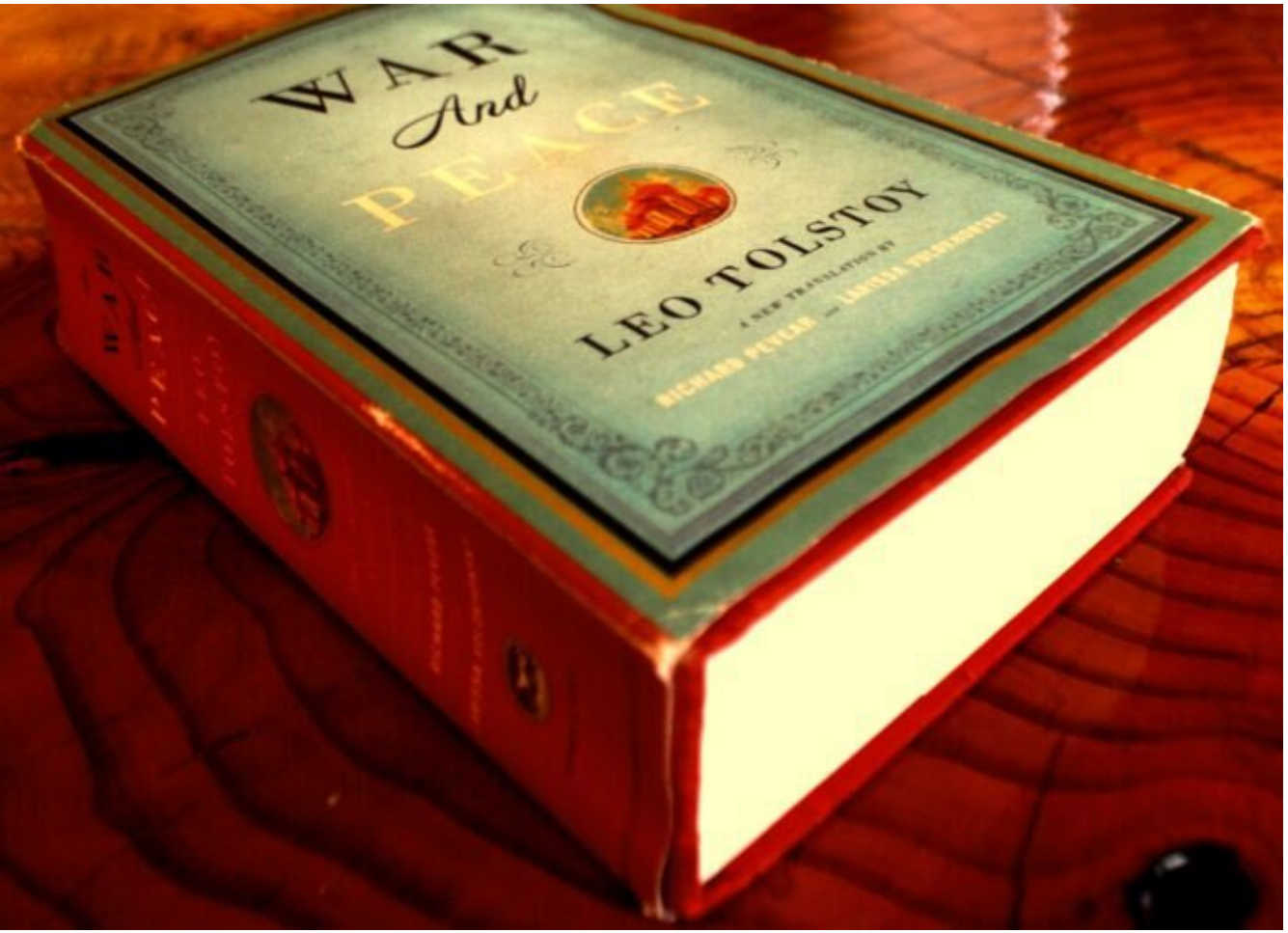
Just tell me what I need to know



- TL;DR
- “If you take away one thing today, it’s…”

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Just tell me what I need to know



- TL;DR
- “If you take away one thing today, it’s…”
- 27/9/3 Rule

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Just tell me what I need to know

27/9/3 Rule

"Our water main broke, potentially allowing bacteria into the system. Please boil all tap water for one minute before drinking. We expect repairs to be finished by tomorrow."

Countyhealthrankings.org

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Just tell me what I need to know

27/9/3 Rule

"**Our water main broke**, potentially allowing bacteria into the system. Please **boil all tap water** for one minute before drinking. We expect **repairs to be finished by tomorrow**."

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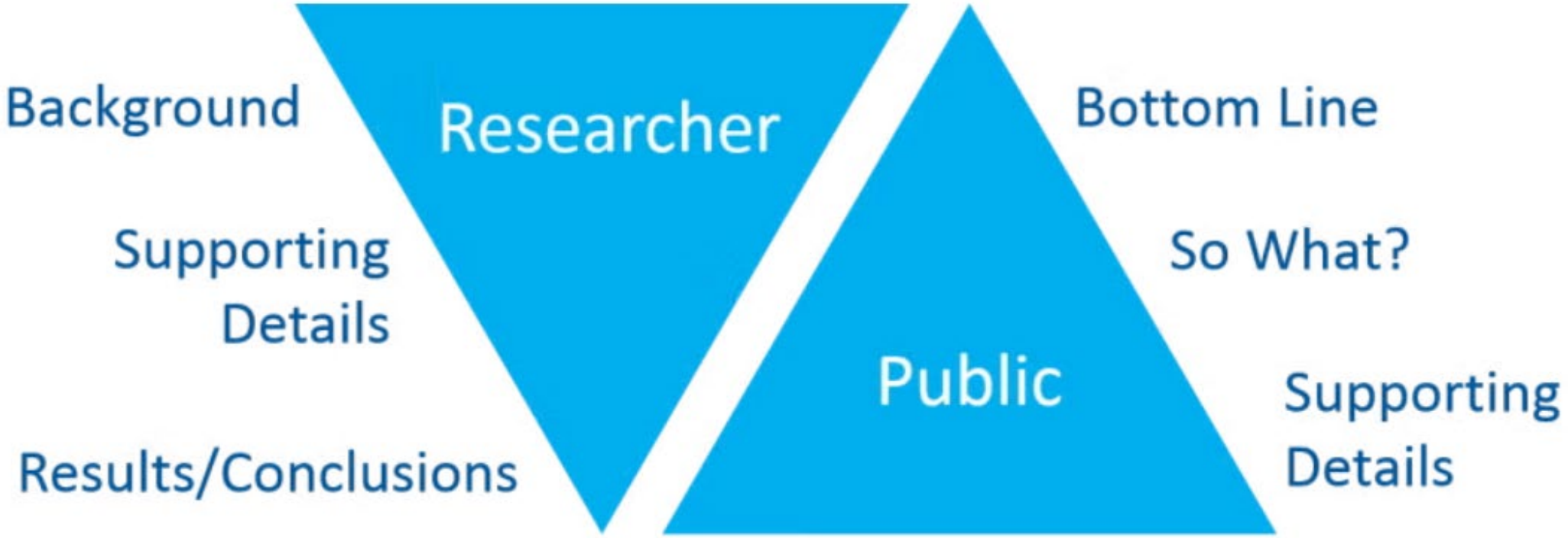
So What?



Adapted from Nancy Baron's *Escape from the Ivory Tower* AAAS Center for Public Engagement with Science & Technology

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Communicating the science of water

Keep it concise

Make it clear

Get confirmation

Improve clarity, retain accuracy

- Plain words
- Short sentences
- Limit jargon
- Less is usually more



Improve clarity, retain accuracy



To make soy sauce, koji is inoculated with *Aspergillus oryzae*, which catalyzes the enzymatic hydrolysis of proteins and starches into amino acids and fermentable sugars, initiating a complex Maillard reaction during subsequent brine fermentation.

valeriemonckton.com 12 tips to simplify science communication

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Improve clarity, retain accuracy



To make soy sauce, a mold called *Aspergillus oryzae* is combined with a mixture of steamed soybeans and wheat. This mold helps break down proteins and starches into amino acids and sugars, initiating a chemical reaction in the next stage of fermentation that is responsible for soy sauce's rich flavors.

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Improve clarity, retain accuracy



To make soy sauce, a type of mold is mixed with steamed soybeans and wheat. This mold helps break down the ingredients into smaller parts through a chemical reaction that is key to creating soy sauce's rich flavors.

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Improve clarity, retain accuracy



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Improve clarity, retain accuracy



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Clarity without clutter



- Stories
- Humor
- Graphics

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Clarity without clutter

The New York Times

When an Eel Climbs a Ramp to Eat Squid From a Clamp, That's a Moray

Moray eels can hunt on land, and footage from a recent study highlights how they accomplish this feat with a sneaky second set of jaws.

Share full article 316



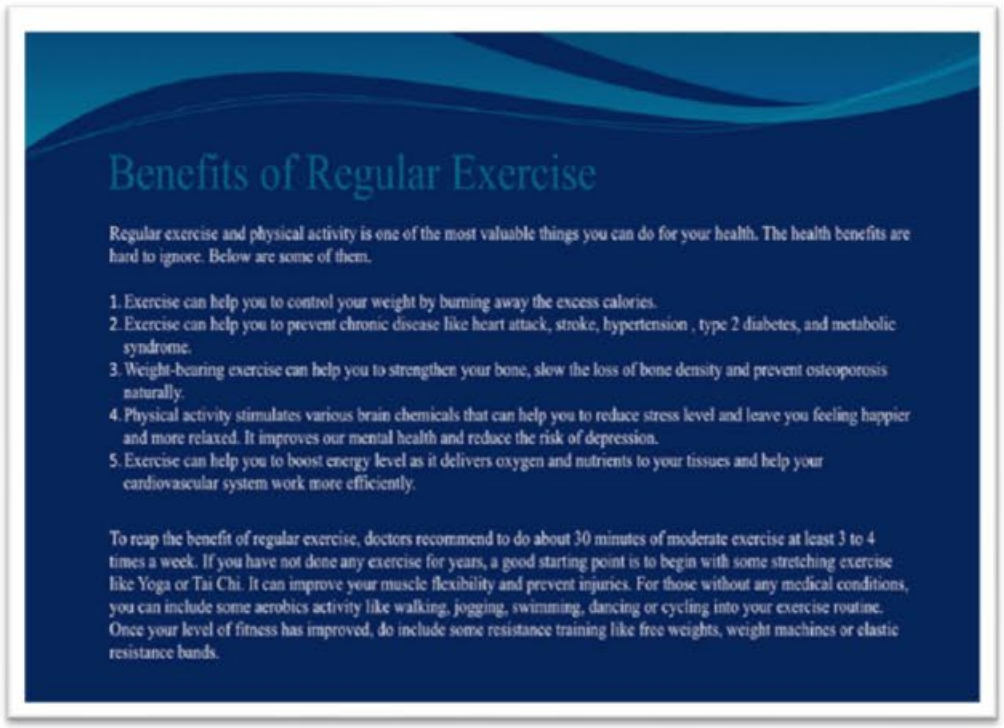
When an eel wants a squid that's on land — God forbid! — that's a moray. Mehta et al.

By Sabrina Imbler

June 22, 2021

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Clarity without clutter

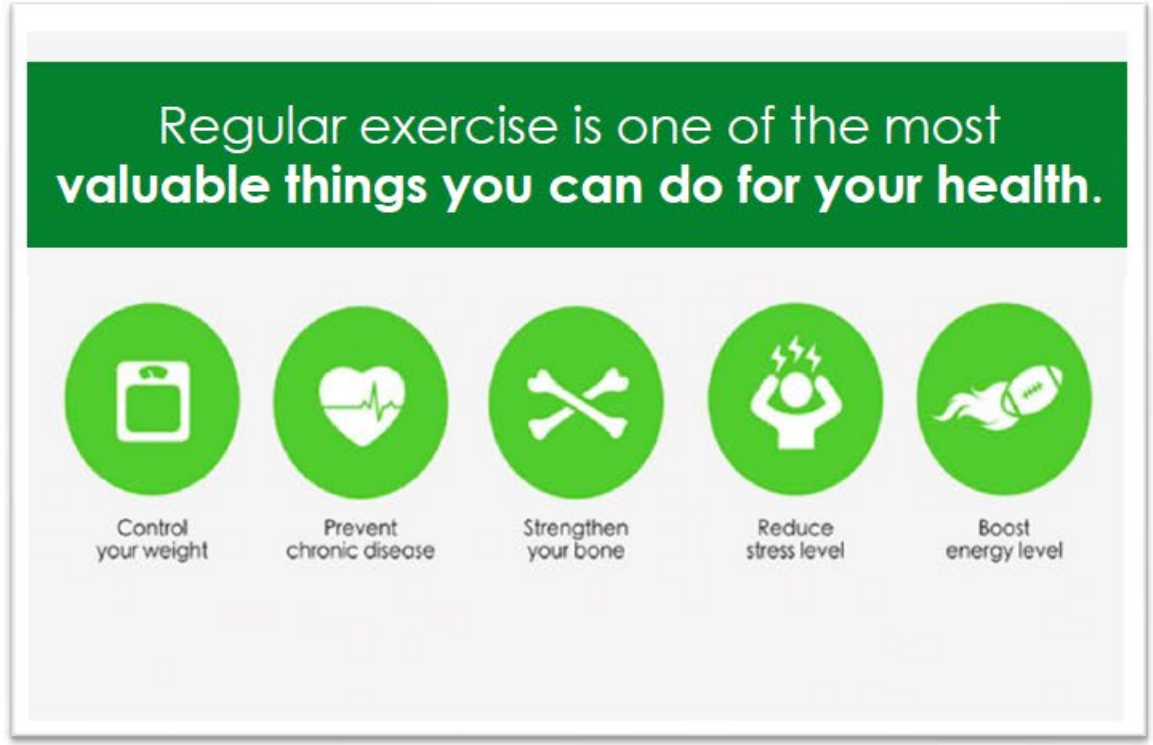


Benefits of Regular Exercise

Regular exercise and physical activity is one of the most valuable things you can do for your health. The health benefits are hard to ignore. Below are some of them.

1. Exercise can help you to control your weight by burning away the excess calories.
2. Exercise can help you to prevent chronic disease like heart attack, stroke, hypertension , type 2 diabetes, and metabolic syndrome.
3. Weight-bearing exercise can help you to strengthen your bone, slow the loss of bone density and prevent osteoporosis naturally.
4. Physical activity stimulates various brain chemicals that can help you to reduce stress level and leave you feeling happier and more relaxed. It improves our mental health and reduce the risk of depression.
5. Exercise can help you to boost energy level as it delivers oxygen and nutrients to your tissues and help your cardiovascular system work more efficiently.

To reap the benefit of regular exercise, doctors recommend to do about 30 minutes of moderate exercise at least 3 to 4 times a week. If you have not done any exercise for years, a good starting point is to begin with some stretching exercise like Yoga or Tai Chi. It can improve your muscle flexibility and prevent injuries. For those without any medical conditions, you can include some aerobics activity like walking, jogging, swimming, dancing or cycling into your exercise routine. Once your level of fitness has improved, do include some resistance training like free weights, weight machines or elastic resistance bands.



GWU CCAS Graduate Blog: How to make Great Powerpoint Presentations

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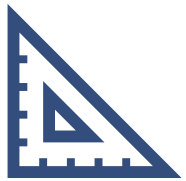
Clarity through tailored messaging

- Audience → Message
- Lead with knowns
- CAP method





Communicating the Science of Water



Keep it concise



Make it clear



Get confirmation

You don’t have to take my word for it



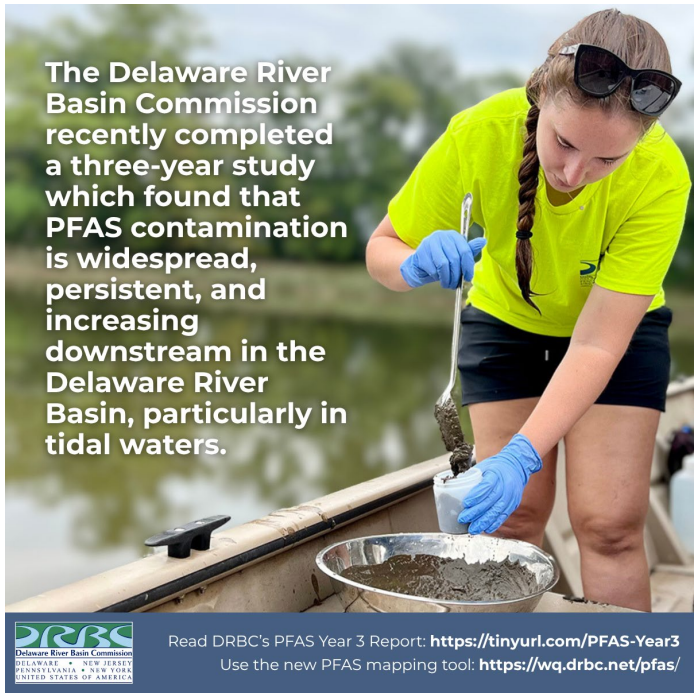
- Local media
- Trusted partners
- Translators

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Clear and concise science communication grows the value of your water work.



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