

Fitness Article



The Facts of Physical Fitness

It is highly recommended that both children and adults participate in regular physical activity. This reduces the risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, obesity and diabetes, among many other health benefits. If you decide to begin an exercise program of any kind, please consult with your physician to discuss your personal needs.

Commonly asked questions:

What is in this for me?

- You will feel better both mentally and physically
- You will have better control over your weight and cholesterol level
- You will have better control over your blood pressure
- You will increase your heart and lung fitness as well as your muscle tone
- You need NOT reach athletic proportions of fitness to be healthy!

How hard do I have to work at this?

You do not have to work as hard as some will have you believe. Moderate amounts of physical activity are enough to offer you many benefits. The key to collecting on those benefits is whatever you decide to do, do it regularly.

How do I get started?

If you have not been active at all check with your doctor. Be sure to discuss any medical conditions you have and the effect and/or impact of physical activity. Once you get your doctors approval, begin your exercise program slow and easy. Start with small steps that remind you to keep moving. Take a short walk, use stairs instead of elevators, work in your garden, mow your lawn, and rake your leaves - anything that involves movement of the body. Remember that you need to do this regularly! Once your body has become accustomed to a low lever of physical exertion, begin to consider a form of aerobic exercise you feel you will enjoy. This could be walking, cycling, swimming, step aerobics, low impact aerobics or a stationary bike. Begin very slowly and gradually increase your time and physical effort.

How long should I work out?

The answer to this question depends on your fitness goals. If you just wish to do the minimum, or are new at exercising, as little as three twenty minute sessions of some form of aerobic activity is sufficient. If you wish to lose weight, you would want to increase this amount of exercise gradually to 45 - 60 minutes four to five times a week. If you are just starting, do not let those numbers alarm you yet. It will not seem so bad when your body is in better shape. For a general and overall fitness routine, the recommendation is that healthy adults should strive for about 30 minutes of aerobic activity three to five times a week.

A few more tips:

- Choose activities that you enjoy doing.
- Try to vary your activities so you do not get bored with the same old routine.
- Exercise with a friend or group if that will help you stay motivated.
- Set small goals and reward yourself along the way.
- Consult with a health care provider if you are beginning a new exercise program.



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