

Exercise

Little Increases.....Lead to Big Gains!



You are not alone in this country if you are currently not exercising most days. It is estimated 80% of Americans don't do enough exercise, with as many as half of them not doing any at all. Jobs these days are more sedentary, so people no longer are physically active as part of their day. Exercise for most people takes thought and planning.

Why exercise? Not only will it help lower your risk of diabetes, heart disease, back, bone and joint troubles, it will also help manage your weight, elevate your mood, keep your bones strong, and help you sleep better, to name just a few.

Life is very fast paced and busy. There are many things you can do each day. You need to make exercise a priority and schedule it into most days. After all, if you don't use it, you do start to lose it over time! Your heart is just one big muscle you need to keep strong. You don't need to run marathons or swim the seven seas. You just need to get it moving in whatever way you chose on most days.

Should you check with your doctor first?

If you have not been exercising regularly for awhile, are overweight, have a high risk of heart trouble or have other chronic health issues, see your doctor for an evaluation before beginning any exercise program. Once you are given the go ahead, start very slowly.

Good News!

Thinking about exercising for 30-60 minutes can be overwhelming and perhaps not possible when you are first starting. Instead, ask yourself, "What can I do right now?" and then do it! The best part about this is anything is better than nothing! Then, even a little bit more done on a regular basis will improve your strength and stamina! You can start with just 5 minutes most days and then every week increase it by 5 minutes.

Motivation

This is probably the most important and hardest hurdle towards regular exercise. People start and stop. You need to remind yourself of all the physical reasons to exercise. Set a goal—you want to lose weight and keep it off, you want to keep your bones strong, you want to be able to climb steps with ease, you want your back to hurt less, etc. Imagine how great you will feel when you are done! Remind yourself you deserve some time to yourself and exercise can provide it.

**Remember, you may not love to exercise,
but you will love how you feel because you do!**



More Steps to take to start exercising...

Reward

It is hard for many people to keep exercising. Track what you are doing—it is rewarding to see how far you have gone! Set milestones and when you reach them reward yourself with something you really want!

Variety

Many people need variety to keep it interesting. Changing up your exercise every couple of months leads to even greater training rewards. Change how often you exercise, the type of exercise, how long you exercise and/or the intensity. It is all good! When the weather changes, explore indoor options. Make the commitment that you want to do this and then schedule it into your day. Just as if you scheduled an appointment with someone else, you would be there, keep the date with yourself too. Who can be more important than you? You and your body deserve this time together!

Work towards a balanced program

The ideal exercise program includes some aerobic, strength training and flexibility/balance components. Aerobic exercise gets your heart rate up to strengthen your body overall, stretching for flexibility helps prevent injury, and strength training works to build muscle mass to counteract the muscle mass you begin to lose at age 40. It also aids in keeping bones strong. Slowly add these extra components to what you do each week!

Recognize that life will happen

Could you commit to never letting exercise slide more than 1 week? There are always days in which, with even the best thought out plans, it doesn't happen. Or sometimes there are times in your life when you are not physically able to exercise. Pick yourself up the next day or as soon as you are able and get at it again!

Tips

- Maybe you are a social exerciser—find a partner so you are less likely to back out.
- Check out classes! Dance! Yoga! Pilates! Spinning! Martial Arts!
- Borrow the neighbor's dog!
- Join a walking program like 10,000 steps a day!
- Work out in the morning so that you never run out of time in the day for it and you will have more energy the whole day!
- Wear a pedometer!

Invest in yourself

For more information, check out these web site:

www.dummies.com (click on health and fitness)

www.exercise.about.com

www.shapeup.org

www.walking.about.com
