

### Exercise

Regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health. If you don't use your body, you will surely lose it. Your muscles will become flabby and weak. Your heart and lungs won't function efficiently. And your joints will be stiff and easily injured. Inactivity is as much of a health risk as smoking!

Our bodies were meant to move. Regular exercise is necessary for physical fitness and good health. It reduces the risk of heart disease, cancer, high blood pressure, diabetes, and other diseases. It can improve your appearance and delay the aging process. It's also a great stress reliever.

#### Getting the Most Out of Your Exercise Program

- It's important to get an OK from your physician before you start any exercise program
- Start by setting achievable goals. Nothing motivates and keeps you going like success!
- 15 minutes of exercise a day can increase your lifespan by three years.
- Find an activity that you enjoy such as dancing, swimming, or playing a sport. The more fun it is, the more likely you are to stick with it.
- A variety of exercises is the key to fitness success, so you don't get bored.
- You also need to pay attention to intensity or level of difficulty. When an exercise becomes easy to complete, it's a sign you need to work a little harder and give your body a new challenge.

**There are 5 types of exercises that will turn your peak fitness regimen into a truly comprehensive exercise plan:**

#### 1. Interval Training (burst type activities)

This is both aerobic and anaerobic, but the research shows that the anaerobic phase is far more important. The BEST way to condition your heart and burn fat is NOT to jog or walk steadily for an hour. Instead, it's to alternate short bursts of high-intensity exercise with gentle recovery periods.

This type of exercise can dramatically:

- Improve your cardiovascular fitness
- Improve your fat-burning capabilities
- Improve muscle building
- Decrease the amount of time you spend exercising
- Increase the fun of workouts, because you have more variety than other workouts, making them less tedious
- Reduce the risk of injury or overtraining because you're varying intensity. You may be able to avoid overuse injuries or overdoing it with longer workouts.
- Promote the production of human growth hormone (HGH) to add youthful vigor to your years

**Caution!** It's important to ease into interval training gradually and build more stamina over time in order to avoid injuries or overtraining.

#### Interval Training Safety Tips:

- Warm up before starting intervals.
- Assess current conditioning and set training goals that are within your ability.

- Start slowly. (For example, walk 2 minutes then run 2 minutes.) In general, longer intervals provide better results.
- Keep a steady but challenging pace throughout the interval.
- Build the number of repetitions over time.
- Bring your heart rate down to 100-110 bpm during the rest interval.
- Advancement: Increase intensity or duration but not both at the same time.
- Make any changes slowly over a period of time.
- Train on a smooth, flat surface to ensure even effort.
- You can also use circuit training as a form of interval training.

### Advanced Interval Training Workouts:

You can vary your work and recovery intervals based on your goals. Four variables you can manipulate when designing your interval training program include:

- Intensity (speed) of work interval
- Duration (distance or time) of work interval
- Duration of rest or recovery interval
- Number of repetitions of each interval

### 2. Aerobic:

Jogging, walking fast and using an elliptical machine are all examples of aerobic exercise. It will increase the amount of oxygen in your blood and increase endorphins, which act as natural painkillers. Aerobic exercise also activates your immune system, helps your heart pump blood more efficiently, and increases your stamina over time.

Just don't make the mistake of using aerobic as your only form of exercise, as you'll lose out on all the health benefits exercise has to offer.

### 3. Strength Training:

Rounding out your exercise program with a 1-set strength training routine will ensure you're optimizing the possible health benefits of a regular exercise program.

The more muscles you have, the more calories you burn, even when resting!

You need enough repetitions to exhaust your muscles. The weight should be heavy enough that this can be done in fewer than 12 repetitions, yet light enough to do a minimum of 4 repetitions. It is also important NOT to exercise the same muscle groups every day. They need at least two days of rest to recover, repair and rebuild.

### 4. Core Exercises:

Your body has 29 core muscles located mostly in your back, abdomen and pelvis. This group of muscles provides the foundation for movement throughout your entire body, and strengthening them can help protect and support your back, make your spine and body less prone to injury, and help you gain greater balance and stability.

**Pilates** and **Yoga** are great for strengthening your core muscles, as are specific exercises you can learn from a personal trainer. Even if a personal trainer is not in the cards for you right now, you can do these with little equipment and in virtually any location.

Focusing on your breath and mindfulness along with increasing your flexibility is an important element of total fitness.

## 5. Stretching:

Simple yoga moves are a great way to stretch. Remember to breathe into a stretch and don't ever bounce.

### Exercise Tips for Those with Chronic Health Problems

Remember that even if you're chronically ill, exercise can be a potent ally. That being said, if you have cancer or any other chronic disease, you will of course need to tailor your exercise routine to your individual situation, taking into account your stamina and current health. For example, you may at times need to exercise at a lower intensity or for shorter durations, but do make a determined effort to keep yourself moving. Even cancer patients should aim for a minimum of 2.5 hours of exercise a week, at moderate intensity, to boost their chances of successful recovery.

Always listen to your body and if you feel you need a break, take time to rest. But, even exercising for just a few minutes a day is better than not exercising at all.

In the event you are suffering from an overly weakened immune system, you may want to exercise in your home instead of visiting a public gym. But remember that exercise will ultimately help boost your immune system, so it's important to continue with your program, even if you suffer from chronic illness or cancer.

Six to eight hours a night seems to be the optimal amount of sleep for most adults, and too much or too little can have adverse effects on your health.



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