

Physical Activity/Exercise

Physical activity is necessary for your body to function optimally and allow you to be healthy, feel great, and do everything you would like to in your life. In the past, many more people got the necessary activity in their work and everyday life than they do today. With today's modern conveniences, technology, and automation people have the tendency to spend much more time doing sedentary activities. For this reason, most of us have to make a point to be more active to prevent many health problems that come with inactivity.

Some interesting statistics: 7 in 10 American adults don't regularly exercise, and nearly 4 in 10 aren't physically active at all. (Natl. Center for Health Stats. 2001) Only 3 in 10 are physically active on a regular basis – defined as 30 minutes of light to moderate exercise 5 times a week, or 20 minutes of vigorous exercise 3 times a week. About 300,000 people a year in the U.S. die from diseases related to inactivity.

Physical activity can be planned exercise or just everyday activities that cause you to move your body. Physical activity can include: certain occupations, some household chores, yard work, walking, sports, working out at a health club, playing with your kids, weight lifting, stretching, yoga, Tai Chi, or calisthenics. In general, you should try to be physically active as much as possible in your everyday life as well as getting at least 20-30 minutes of light to moderate aerobic activity (activity that causes an increase in heart rate and respiration) on most days of the week.

Benefits: Physical activity reduces the risk of all-cause death, cardiovascular death, coronary heart disease, obesity, high blood pressure, breast and colon cancer, osteoporosis, and type 2 diabetes. Physical activity improves mental health, and functioning of muscles, bones, and joints.

Types: A balanced exercise program should include aerobic, strengthening, and flexibility exercise. Types of aerobic exercise include walking, biking, dancing, "aerobics", and swimming. Strengthening can be done using body weight, soup cans, tubing, free weights, machines, or isometrics -contracting your muscles against an immovable resistance.

Getting Started: There are many resources available to help you figure out how you should exercise. If you are experiencing health problems your chiropractor, MD, or physical therapist will be able to prescribe exercise appropriate for your condition. Books, TV, internet, community exercise programs, and health clubs are some places you can find information. Personal trainers are also a great resource and can provide you with information and motivation to help you meet your physical goals. Always talk to your doctor before becoming much more physically active than you already are to make sure this is safe for you.

