

EXERCISE— GET A MOVE ON



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Obesity is one of the leading causes of chronic medical problems in the United States. The prevalence of obesity across the population has more than doubled since 2000 (www.cdc.gov). One of the leading causes of obesity is a sedentary (inactive) lifestyle. With the popularity of video games, computers and televisions, the population has become increasingly inactive. The trend for childhood obesity is increasing, which results in long term chronic medical conditions later in life. Obesity can be linked to chronic medical conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, and vascular disease.

One measure of obesity is called the Body Mass Index (BMI). This is a number that calculates the amount of body fat as measured by the individual's height and weight. You can find the BMI calculator online at <http://www.bmi-calculator.net/>. A BMI of 18.5-24.9 is considered normal range. If the BMI is 25-29, this is considered overweight, and a BMI of >30 is considered obese. The best way to combat obesity is diet and exercise.

There are two types of exercise:

Aerobic exercise is defined as any activity that makes you breathe harder and raises your heart rate for a sustained period of time. Aerobic means "using oxygen". Aerobic activity can include walking, running, swimming, skiing, and biking- practically any activity that makes you breathe hard and makes your heart beat faster. The intensity of the exercise can vary from moderate to very strenuous. The current guidelines suggest at least 2 ½ hours of moderate intensity exercise per week, or at least 30 minutes daily (www.cdc.gov).

The health benefits of aerobic exercise include:

- increased metabolism of oxygen, strengthening the heart muscle, improved function of the blood vessels, improved muscle strength,
- reduce blood pressure
- increase stamina.
- improve mood and often helps those who suffer from depression
- Improve sleep
- The risk of developing type II Diabetes is reduced with daily aerobic exercise.
- A recent study that will be published in the "Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences" indicates that moderate, regular exercise increases memory and thinking in older people.

- Aerobic exercise can also help to maintain strong bones and reduce the risk of osteoporosis.
- Older adults should stay as active as possible to improve balance and reduce risk of falls

Anaerobic exercise is defined as activity that uses/strengthens specific muscle groups. Types of anaerobic activities include weight lifting, and body building. Activities that are performed for 5 minutes or longer, are also considered aerobic.

Many people think they need to join an expensive gym or buy exercise equipment. In fact, all you need is a good pair of walking shoes, and you are set to begin a successful exercise program. At least some physical activity is better than none.

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL EXERCISE PROGRAM

If you have a chronic health condition, talk with your primary care provider before beginning an exercise program. Start slowly, and gradually increase your activity.



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- Go fly a kite- a great way to get outdoors and run with your children! This provides a good aerobic (running) exercise, as well as upper body strengthening, and hand coordination.
- Keep a calendar or diary of your activity. Write down the amount of time you exercise daily. This will not only keep you on track, but will allow you to chart your progress toward your goals.
- Walk the dog- many studies have shown that pet therapy, including dog walking, lowers the blood pressure, improves stamina and reduces depression. Your dog will also benefit!



<http://www.webweaver.nu/clipart/animals/dogs/3.shtml>



Image from: http://www.free-clipart-pictures.net/sports_clipart.html

- Throw a ball with your children- this will not only benefit you, but will encourage aerobic activity for your children. Hand-eye coordination will be improved, as well as upper body strength and mobility
- Skiing, especially cross-country, is one of the best winter activities that gives excellent upper and lower body work-out
- Put on your dance shoes- grab a partner and move those feet. Some people enjoy a new dance routine called *Zumba* dancing. This is a great dance/workout routine set to Latin music. What a great way to meet new people and get interval and resistance training at the same time! Check your local YMCA or health club for class schedules. There is even a *Zumba* dance class on television that you can do from your own home.



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- Put on your skates—remember how much fun you had as a child when you went roller skating? This is a great aerobic activity that works the upper and lower body. Many parks have paved trails that are perfect for skating. Remember to wear a helmet and knee/elbow pads for protection.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator- add another level each week and set a goal of reaching the top!
- Park the car in the back of the lot and walk to the door.
- Use a pedometer when you walk- will help you set and meet your goals for distance. You will be surprised how far you can walk!
- Start a walking group- strap on those walking shoes and get outdoors. Walking in a group is a social activity that will increase motivation. No special equipment is needed, other than a good pair of walking shoes.
- Gardening is a great way to get outdoors, and grow your own healthy foods.



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- Dust off that bike and climb on. Biking is one of the best aerobic exercises for lower body strength, and is gentle on the joints. Many people who have knee or hip pain will find biking is the exercise of choice. Remember to wear your helmet for safety.
- Set realistic goals- don't expect to run 5 miles the first day. Start with a 5 minute stretch, followed by 5 minute brisk walk, then 5 minute cooldown stretch. Increase by 5 minutes per week for a goal of 30 minutes in 6 weeks.
- Dive right in!- swimming is one of the best overall exercises. While swimming is one of the best exercises for strength and upper body toning, it is very gentle on the joints. Many people with arthritis (or painful joints) will benefit from swimming.



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- If you like being in the pool, try water aerobics, or just walk in the shallow end- you will be surprised how much effort it takes to walk against the resistance of water. And, water aerobics is great for arthritis or sore joints.
- Join a team or group sport, such as volleyball, basketball or softball. Many studies have shown that people stick to an exercise when they have a buddy or team.

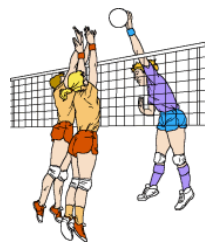


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- Are you old enough to remember that hula-hoop? Even if you aren't, exercising with a hoola-hoop just 10 minutes per day is a fun, aerobic activity that uses many different muscle groups.

- Remember to drink plenty of water. Avoid caffeine beverages before and after exercise- substitute water instead.
- If you feel your muscles start to cramp, or you notice chest tightness- sit down right away. If the chest tightness worsens, have someone call for help.



<http://www.webweaver.nu/clipart/people/>

Great web resources:

<http://www.Letsmove.gov>

<http://physicalactivityplan.org>

<http://www.healthypeople.gov>

<http://www.cdc.gov>

<http://www.bmi-calculator.net/>

<http://paleoterran.squarespace.com/journal/2011/3/3/walking-the-ideal-exercise.html>