

OTHER IMPORTANT TIPS

Start Slowly – Start with 10 minutes a couple times a day if you can. Go slow and be consistent.

Be Comfortable – Wear comfortable, non-restrictive clothing, supportive shoes and layers so that you can adjust as your body temperature rises.

Breathe – Remember to breathe consistently throughout your exercise.

Hydrate – Drink plenty of water before, during and after your activity.

Warm Up & Cool Down – Always ease your body into and out of exercise. Walk slowly or stretch for at least 5 minutes.

Build Up – Gradually increase the time and intensity of your activity. It will become easier as you exercise consistently.

Mix It Up – Vary the type of activity you do. Try a new sport or take a tai chi or yoga class for variation. Doing new things will help you remain interested.

Make It Fun – Get active with friends, listen to music or take up an active hobby to keep it fun and interesting.

Be Consistent – If you can do a little bit every day, it will eventually become part of your routine and you will automatically include it. If you only do a lot occasionally, it will be difficult to keep it up and you won't realize any of the benefits.

Keep an Activity Log – Write down what types of activity you do everyday. As the days go on, it will be easier to keep up the pace when you look at all of the progress you are making.

Wear a Pedometer – Some fitness plans advise wearing a pedometer and making sure you walk at least 10,000 steps a day. This can be kind of a fun challenge and may inspire you to get moving and keep moving.

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MOST IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER

Get Clearance First – Before you begin, have a check-up and talk with your doctor or healthcare practitioner about any special conditions you might have.

IF SOMETHING HURTS, STOP DOING IT - If you have a persistent pain when you exercise, take a break. If you are sick, you should go easy or skip a few days. When you resume, start slowly again. Know that there are some warning signs that mean you should stop what you are doing and consult a doctor:

- Chest pain or pressure
- Breathing trouble or excessive shortness of breath
- Persistent or sharp muscle or joint pain.
- Nausea
- Unusual balance difficulty
- Severe illness



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Benefits of exercise

Just as a proper diet and engaging activities can help you live a more fulfilling life, physical activity will yield a multitude of physical, mental and psychological benefits. Here are the benefits that result from regular exercise:

Feel and look better

- **Self Confidence** – Being active and feeling strong will naturally help you feel more self confident and sure of yourself. This improved sense of well being might help your overall mood and attitude about life.
- **Contentment** – Natural endorphins produced by exercise may actually help you feel better and alleviate sadness or depression.
- **Social Interaction** – If you choose, exercise can be a great way to meet people and socialize. Joining a class or walking with friends should make the exercise more enjoyable and it can also help you stay connected with others.
- **Sleep Better** – People who exercise regularly tend to sleep better than those who don't. They usually fall asleep more quickly, sleep more deeply and awake less often during the night. Some fitness experts believe that a very short period of moderate activity in the evening. A 10 minute walk after dinner will help you sleep more deeply at night. It is important to note that if you regularly experience problems sleeping, the general recommendation is to exercise early in the day rather than in the evening because exercise can keep you up at night. Having exercised earlier in the day should help you sleep better.
- **Mental Acuity (Alzheimer's Disease Prevention)** – New research shows that regular exercise can help prevent Alzheimer's disease and dementia. Exercise helps encourage regular brain functions and can help keep the brain active. Exercise can also provide numerous benefits for patients of Alzheimer's including reduced risk of depression and improving memory and circulation.

Maintain or lose weight

- **Metabolism** – Increase your metabolism; as you increase muscle mass you will burn more calories because muscle burns more calories than fat.
- **Body Composition** – Body composition refers to the makeup of the body in terms of lean mass (muscle, bone, vital tissue, and organs) and fat mass. An optimal ratio of fat to lean mass is an indication of fitness. The right combination of exercise and healthy eating will help you decrease body fat and increase or maintain muscle mass.

Increase mobility, flexibility and balance

- **Balance and Flexibility** – Balance and flexibility will improve when you exercise on a regular basis. Improved strength, flexibility and posture will help with balance and reduce your risk of falling. Greater flexibility should also reduce the pain of arthritis.
- **Mobility** – If you do a variety of exercise, you will naturally increase your coordination. You should be better able to navigate your regular chores and activities.
- **Muscular Strength and Endurance** – Exercise will improve your ability to use your muscles over a brief period of time as well as sustain your strength for repeated use or over a longer period. Greater muscle strength helps improve your ability to balance and increases you ability to perform everyday tasks without straining your muscles. On average, men and women over 40 lose one-quarter to one-third of a pound of muscle each year which is replaced by fat. This gradual loss results in a one to two percent loss of strength each year causing movement to become more difficult and contributing to a reduction in activity and exercise. Strength training, which can be achieved in a variety of ways, is particularly important for counteracting this damaging loss of muscle. Research at Tufts University has shown that strength training is one of the most important ways to slow down the process of aging and protect all of the body's functions. The research has also indicated that strength training can dramatically improve arthritis pain and stiffness as well as decrease depression.

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Reduce risk of disease, sickness and injury (by strengthening muscles and bones)

- **Immune Function** – A healthy, strong body fights off infection and sickness more easily and more quickly. Rather than sapping your energy reserves entirely, recovery from illness should be less strenuous.
- **Cardio-Respiratory and Cardiovascular Function** – Regular physical activity lowers your risk of heart disease and high blood pressure. If you have hypertension, exercise will lower your blood pressure.
- **Bone Density/Osteoporosis** – Exercise protects against loss in bone mass. Better bone density will reduce the risk of osteoporosis and lowers risk of falling and broken bones. Post-menopausal women can lose as much as 2 percent bone mass each year and men also lose bone mass as they age. Research done at Tufts University shows that strength training can dramatically reduce the loss of bone mass, help restore bones, and contribute to better balance and less fractures.
- **Gastrointestinal Function** – Regular exercise promotes the efficient elimination of waste and encourages your digestive health.
- **Chronic Conditions and Cancer** – Regular physical activity lowers risk of Alzheimer's disease and dementia, diabetes, obesity, heart disease, osteoporosis and colon cancer, to name just a few. It also helps in the management of high cholesterol and arthritis pain.

Good physical fitness improves the way the body works, and enables the body to rebound much more quickly from sickness or injury. These physical benefits along with the natural endorphins produced by exercise may also naturally lead to an improved mood and help decrease depression. Physical fitness and a physically active lifestyle may be one of the most important contributions to healthy aging. So

start now.

