

Exercise? Who, Me?

Sometimes life prevents us from paying attention to our health and bodies. Many of us work long days, and then are so tired or stressed out we just want to kick back and relax after work. So, rather than doing physical activities, we spend most of our leisure time on the computer, watching television, reading the newspaper or latest edition of our favorite gossip magazine.

Modern conveniences, such as cars, dishwashers, and washing machines reduce the amount of activity we do. Some people (unfortunately, not the author of this newsletter) can even hire help to clean the home or garden, which allows for even more relaxation time, and less physical work and activity.

No one is telling you to sell the car or junk the dishwasher (or stop reading those mags, for that matter), but we all need to remain aware that everything counts, and something is always better than nothing.

Consider this, from the U.S. Surgeon General:

- About 40% of U.S. adults do not engage in **any** regular physical activity.
- Only 23% of U.S. adults engage in regular, vigorous activity that involve large muscle groups for 20 minutes or more 3 days per week.
- Not surprisingly, in the U.S., 27% of adults are obese, and 34% are overweight.

Do you see a connection?!

The USDA's MyPyramid has great tips on activities, planning meals, and monitoring your progress at: www.mypyramid.gov.

Other helpful web sites include:

www.acefitness.org

www.acsm.org

www.surgeongeneral.gov

www.dserunners.com (~ weekly run/walk races, + fees)

www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/

(Click on "Consumer Corner", then "Just for you", then "Get Moving Calculator")



6 Good Reasons to Exercise

- 1) Counteracts the Ills of Overweight**
 - Decreases your blood pressure.
 - Decreases your cholesterol.
 - Decreases your risk for diabetes.
 - Decreases your risk for heart disease and stroke.
- 2) Preserves Muscle Mass** – Exercise helps to decrease the amount of muscle mass lost during weight loss.
- 3) Preserves Bone Strength** – Decreases your risk for osteoporosis and helps strengthen your bones.
- 4) Improves Long-Term Success with Weight Control** – In weight management, daily vigorous exercise increases success at losing weight and keeping it off.
- 5) Calorie Control** – Exercise burns additional calories.
- 6) Improves Confidence and Psychological Well-Being** – Makes you feel good, and (possibly) look better, too!

Starting Your Exercise Program

The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) provides simple guidelines for starting an exercise program. The ACSM states; “There are individuals who should get their doctor's permission prior to beginning an exercise program.” Anyone with an unstable medical condition, heart and lung problems or other major medical condition, will want to seek an exercise prescription from his/her doctor. Injury may also require an individual to wait for the healing to be complete prior to beginning exercise.

The ASCM uses a common sense approach to beginning your new program. Part of their recommendations include:

“start slowly - listen to your body and your doctor...”

For moderate endurance exercise, simply walk a little further each time you exercise and gradually increase the pace of your walks as the weeks pass. For strength exercise, lift a weight that you usually lift but do it more times than normal.”

Make a list of exercises you could do.

But, before making that list, ask your self these three basic questions:

1) What do I like to do? What was fun for me as a child? Do I like being in a group setting or working out alone?

2) What fits my lifestyle and schedule? Consider the budget, weather conditions, clothing or equipment needs.

3) As noted from the ACSM quote above, do I have health or physical limitations that require exercise restrictions from my MD? What kind of skills may be needed?

How about these exercises/activities to help begin your list?

Want to burn 150 calories? Here's how to do it.

- ❖ Gardening (30–45 minutes)
- ❖ Washing window or floors (45-60 minutes)
- ❖ Wheeling self in wheelchair (30-40 minutes)
- ❖ Walking 2 miles (In 30 minutes)
- ❖ Playing Volleyball (45-60 minutes)
- ❖ Basketball- Shooting baskets (30 minutes)
- ❖ Bicycling 5 miles (In 30 minutes)
- ❖ Stair Climbing (15 minutes)
- ❖ Dancing briskly (30 minutes)
- ❖ Water Aerobics (30 minutes)
- ❖ Swimming laps (20 minutes)
- ❖ Jogging 1 ½ miles (In 15 minutes)

Note: List adapted from *The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight & Obesity*

To learn more about nutrition programs offered at UCSF Medical Center, contact:

- The Nutrition Counseling Center at 415-353-2291.
- The UCSF Weight Management Program at 415-353-2105.

How About Walking?

The U.S. Surgeon General states; “Engaging in moderate physical activity for at least 30 minutes per day will help ensure that sufficient calories are used to provide health benefits.” And, even low levels of intensity (for example, a brisk walk for 30 minutes per day) would, for most persons, result in burning an extra 600 to 1,100 calories per week.

Walking can be an inexpensive, convenient, healthy way to improve your physical fitness. Start slowly and take short, frequent walks, gradually increasing frequency and distance.

You may begin with as little as 15 minutes a day. If just beginning, then try to pick a flat route, or one with benches. You can even start with three, five minute walks and gradually increase as capable to 30-60 minutes a day of brisk walking, and 60-90 minutes to promote weight loss/maintenance.

Don't do too much too soon. By gradually increasing the frequency and then duration of the walk you can help prevent skipping walks or even quitting because of soreness, fatigue or injury. Worry about picking up the speed and intensity last.

Find Those Opportunities (and plan them):

- Wake up 30 minutes early for work/or day's planned events.
- Walk to work.
- Walk during lunch break.
- Walk during any other breaks at work.
- Walk home after work.
- Walk after dinner.
- Walk on the weekends.
- Get off the bus a few stops earlier.

Keep it fun!

- Vary your walks with different places and directions (include parks, stairs, beaches and hills as possible).
- Bring entertainment (music or radio).
- Find groups or partner to walk with you.
- Pay attention to your surroundings and sights (and traffic) during your walk.
- Use a pedometer (Long-term goal: 10,000 steps per day for health, and 12,000 to 15,000 to help promote weight loss and maintenance).
- Remember to take it slow at first.

So, what are you waiting for? Start exercising. NOW!