

## **EXERCISE: WHICH ONE FITS YOU?**

### **The Benefits of Exercise**

Regular and brisk exercise contributes to good health in many ways. It improves the efficiency of the heart and increases the amount of oxygen the body can process in a given amount of time. Those who exercise regularly often lose excess fat and improve muscle strength and stamina. Many also develop an improved self-image leading to further adoption of positive healthy behavior, including that related to smoking and nutrition. Benefits often experienced by people who exercise regularly include:

### **FEELING BETTER**

Exercise:

- Gives you more energy
- Helps you to cope with stress & anxiety
- Improves your self image
- Improves your ability to fall asleep quickly and sleep well
- Provides a way to share an activity with family & opportunities to meet new friends
- Strengthens bones & reduces risk of osteoporosis and fractures
- Prevents injuries caused by muscle weakness

### **LOOKING BETTER**

Exercise:

- Tones your muscles
- Adds glow and vitality to your appearance
- Creates a more relaxed, youthful affect
- Burns off calories to help lose extra pounds & body fat; helps you stay at your healthy weight; builds new muscle mass and, therefore, increases your resting metabolic rate
- Helps control your appetite; creates healthy hunger

### **Does Daily Work Suffice?**

There are only a few jobs that provide vigorous physical exercise, and few of us are in one! Most Americans get little, if any, exercise at work to keep our bodies fit. We are in a hurry so we take time and energy-saving measures like autos and elevators to get us where we need to go in a hurry. Oftentimes, we are so worn out mentally from a day of work and commuting that we long for the opportunity to sit and vegetate. The "HealthierUS.gov" site outlines the needed physical fitness goals our bodies and minds need. "Being active for 30-60 minutes on most days can help you build strength and fitness, relax and reduce stress, gain more energy and improve your sleep. These benefits all add up to decreasing your risk of heart disease and other conditions such as colon cancer, diabetes, osteoporosis and high blood pressure" ([www.healthierus.gov](http://www.healthierus.gov)). And, as the Medline Plus site factually states, "There are 1,440 minutes in every day. Schedule 30 of them for physical activity" (<http://win.niddk.nih.gov/publications/active.htm>). Some activities that generally qualify as providing a moderate activity level include brisk walking, dancing, bicycling, mowing the lawn (not riding the lawn mower), lap swimming, jumping rope and skate boarding. These are classified as "aerobic" types of exercise, which refers to the body's use of oxygen in the production of energy to accomplish the task.

Another type of exercise involves strength training, which should be included in a "well-rounded" program of fitness.

## Calorie-Expenditure Guide

LEVEL	CAL/ HR	ACTIVITIES
Sedentary	80-110	Reading Writing Watching TV Eating Typing Office Work Sewing
	110-150	Walking, slow Dusting Cooking Painting
Light	150-240	Ironing Slow Dancing Riding Mower Golf w/ Cart Dancing
Moderate	240-300	Moderate Walk Golf on Foot Food Shopping Light Gardening Mopping Floors Push Power Mower Bowling Fishing Slow Cycling Vacuuming
	300-360	Scrub Floors Doubles Tennis Calisthenics Golf, Carry Bag Walk Fast Cycle Mod. Table Tennis Badminton
Vigorous	360-420	Walking, Brisk Cycling, Fast Ice Skating Roller Skating
	420-480	Singles Tennis Disco Dancing Water Skiing Horseback Riding Push Hand Mower
	480-600	Slow Jogging Downhill Skiing Sawing Wood Speed Cycling Horseback, Galloping Basketball
Strenuous	600-660	Running 5.5 mph Swimming, Breaststroke
	>660	Ski Touring Running 6 mph Handball Squash

### Strength Training Basics

Strength training is now recognized as an important part of any fitness plan. No longer is lifting weights just for bodybuilders or vanity. It refers to movement which requires your muscles to exert a force against some form of resistance, such as free weights, and is the fastest way to improve muscle strength. The American Heart Association (AHA) issued a scientific statement in July 2007 claiming that prescribed and supervised resistance training can be helpful in rehabilitating individuals after a heart attack as well as being used as a preventative measure. Resistance and weight training, properly supervised:

- ↑ Muscular strength, tone, endurance
- ↑ Functional capacity and independence
- ↑ Quality of life
- ↑ Resting Metabolic Rate
- ↑ Overall fitness, mood, & mobility
- ↓ Disability, with or without cardiovascular disease

Muscles will respond to resistance, whether it comes from body weight (as in push-ups), therapy bands, free weights, machines, or a combination.

Proper body alignment is essential to prevention of injury, as is warming up your muscles with slow stretching prior to any work-out.

Correct breathing techniques are important. Inhale at the beginning of each lift or type of exertion; exhale during the release of each weight or muscle relaxation.

Each set of lifts should consist of 8-12 repetitions. If lifting weights, first increase the number of repetitions and then increase the weight or resistance.

### Exercise Myths

**MYTH 1. Exercising makes you tired.** As the body gets more in shape, most of us actually discover that we have more daily energy. Regular, brisk exercise can also help you resist fatigue and cope with stress.

**MYTH 2. Exercising takes too much time.** Regular exercise does not have to take more than about 25-40 minutes, 4-6 times weekly. Once you've established a comfortable routine, exercising becomes a welcomed part of your life. When you take time to count the cost of NOT exercising, you can't afford not to make some time for your body to stay fit and energized.

**MYTH 3. All exercises give you the same basic benefits.** All physical activities can give you enjoyment. But only regular, brisk and sustained exercises such as brisk walking, jogging, or swimming improve the efficiency of your heart and lungs, and likely tap excess storage energy (body fat) in the process. Other activities such as strength training and stretching give you added muscle strength, flexibility and balance.

**MYTH 4. The older you are, the less you should "work out".** As we age, we lose some muscle mass and gain increased body fat. Middle aged and older individuals benefit from regular exercise in the same way that younger people do. We build endurance, cardiovascular fitness, balance, flexibility and muscle tone. The flab and fat take over at a much slower rate! As we age, it would be wise to adopt an exercise program in keeping with our personal fitness level.

**MYTH 5. Training causes body fat to turn to muscle; when you stop training for a while, the extra muscle turns to fat.** Muscle and fat cells do not morph back and forth. Weight training can help you lose body fat by expending calories (energy). When we take in calories (fuel) and do not expend them, they will store in the body as fat. As you train and build more lean body mass, your resting metabolic rate actually increases.

## To Condition Heart & Lungs

Exercises that improve the condition of your heart and lungs must have three key characteristics.

### These activities must be:

- BRISK— raising the heart & breathing rates
- SUSTAINED—done at least 15-30 minutes without interruption
- REGULAR—repeated at least three (3) times per week

### Which group of activities routinely condition both the heart and lungs?

A	B	C
Bicycling	Baseball	Hiking (uphill)
Downhill Skiing	Bowling	Ice Hockey
Basketball	Football	Jogging
Calisthenics	Golf	Cross-Country Skiing
Field Hockey	Volleyball	Jumping Rope
Handball		Running in Place
Raquetball		Stationary Cycling
Soccer		
Squash		
Swimming		
Tennis, Singles		
Walking		

**Answer C:** These activities are naturally very vigorous. They need to be done at least 15 minutes, 3x per week.

**Column A:** These activities are moderately vigorous and can be excellent conditioners, if done briskly for at least 30 minutes, 3x per week. When done briskly, they also condition the heart & lungs like group C.

**Column B:** These activities are typically not as vigorous or sustained, so they don't condition the heart or lungs. They can improve coordination and muscle tone, and help relieve tension, as well as be enjoyable.

### Additional Reading & Resources

- <http://www.healthierus.gov/exercise.html>
- <http://win.niddk.nih.gov/publications/active.htm>
- <http://www.hoptechno.com/book11.htm>
- [http://www.acsm.org//AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home\\_Page](http://www.acsm.org//AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home_Page)
- <http://archive.mailtribune.com/archive/2006/0321/life/stories/01life.htm>
- <http://www.internetfitness.com/strengthtraining.htm>
- <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3050002>