

FOREVER ACTIVE

PERSONALIZED FITNESS AND WELLNESS FOR MEN 50 +

Getting Active for Life

Introduction

The couch potato epidemic is upon us. In Canada, 54% of women and 44% of men are physically inactive. As alarming, over half of Canadian young people between the ages 5-17 are not active enough for optimal growth and development. For the older adult, only 34% of people over age 65 are active. The cumulative effect of inactivity has serious health risk. Research is clear that inactivity increases the risk of obesity, heart disease, cancer, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis and degenerative arthritis in weight bearing joints like the hips, knees and lower back. Fortunately, the solution or cure for inactivity is just a regular walk, bike ride, friendly game of tennis, bowling, golf or curling away. The benefits of being physically active add up almost immediately. When you are regularly active, you sleep better, feel more relaxed, feel more energetic, feel less stiff and achy, and have more strength and endurance to do the activities you enjoy most. In other words, being regularly active increases your quality of life. This newsletter will discuss how you can easily incorporate physical activity into your daily routine and reap its

Over Coming Barriers to be Active Regularly

If we work hard enough at it we can come up with a million excuses not to exercise. Two of the most common are not enough time and not enough energy. Fortunately these and other “barriers” can be overcome if you are determined and committed to make a change in your life with respect to getting more physical activity. What you need is a plan:

1. Get a physical/health check by your doctor. Most Canadians are overweight and have not exercised regularly for many years. It is best to have a health check by your doctor to rule out any possible health risks or contra-indications to exercise.
2. Make a list of “realistic” health related goals you would like to achieve and the health benefits you will get by achieving them. Remember, “if you understand the why’s, you can overcome the how’s.”
3. Make a list of physical activities you feel you would enjoy and would help you achieve the goals you had previously listed.
4. Set a time line to which you will want to achieve your listed goals.
5. Do a “Reality Check”. Make sure the time it takes you to do your chosen activities fits into the available time you have to do them during the week.



Did You Know

Eight Low Cost Action Choices

1. Get off the bus or subway a stop earlier and walk.
2. Bicycle or walk to work.
3. Take the stairs instead of an elevator.
4. Make a point of taking a 20 to 30 minute walk at lunch rather than sitting for the whole hour.
5. Do your lawn maintenance twice a week rather than just once.
6. Join a club or team event that will force your participation and make you accountable to others.
7. Set a physical activity goal, write down when it needs to be achieved, the action steps you will take to achieve this goal and openly communicate this goal to your family and friends so they can encourage you to achieve it.
8. Limit the time you spend watching TV or being on the internet and use this time to do something physical like going for a walk or working out to a video.

Great References to Encourage you to be more Active

1. Health Canada web site www.paguide.com or 1-888-334-9769 to get;
-Canada’s Physical Activity Guide
-Canada’s Physical Activity Guide for Older Adults
2. Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute www.cflri.ca
3. Canadian Health Network www.canadian-health-network.ca (look under *Active Living*).
4. “Younger Next Year: Live Strong, Fit and Sexy-Until You’re 80 & Beyond”, ISBN-978-0-7611-4773-2

Following the “FITT” program for Regular Physical Activity

Being active is good, understanding how to be active for optimal health is better, therefore understand and follow the “FITT” program for physical activity.

F-Frequency - how often should you exercise?

I- Intensity - how hard to exercise?

T- Time - How long should you exercise?

T- Type– what sort of activity should you participate in?

Frequency

This is easy, young children, teenagers, adults and older adults need to be physically active everyday or at least most days of the week.

Intensity and Time

The intensity and length of time that you are physically active for optimal health benefits are interrelated.

The rule of thumb is the more intense the physical activity the less time is needed for health benefits to occur. Generally this means;

- 60 minutes a day of low-intensity activity, or
- 30-60 minutes a day of moderate activity, or
- 20-30 minutes a day of vigorous activity

The intensity of your physical activity will depend on the type of activity you are doing, the goals you have set for yourself and your level of physical fitness. If you start an activity too intense you increase the likelihood of injuring yourself and decrease the chances that you will enjoy the activity over a longer period of time. There are **no activities** that you should workout at maximum effort all the time.

Gradually working yourself into better physical condition and giving your body sufficient time for recovery (days off and active recovery days when you exercise at a much lower intensity) are hallmarks of well structured professional programs and should be part of everyone's weekly physical activity routine.

Type

Any physical activity is good physical activity but to get optimal health consistency and sustainability is vitally important. Therefore it is important to pick activities that you will enjoy and look forward to doing. That does not mean that they necessarily will be easy to do but they should be enjoyable. Remember, “Success is in the Doing” and if you don’t like what you are doing, you won’t do it for long.

Different Activities Bring Different Benefits but It All Adds Up

Good news for you time challenged individuals: physical activity can be “banked” during the day. Daily activity doesn’t have to come in one big chunk but can be spread out over the whole day. This means that you benefit just as much from three, 10 minute spurts of moderate activity as you do from a solid half-hour.

Choose Activities with Aerobic, Flexibility and Strength-building Benefits

It is important that you include in your physical activity the three components of fitness; cardio vascular, muscle strengthening and flexibility. Most people are familiar with cardio vascular (walking, running, biking, tennis, aerobic classes) and muscle resistance training (weight lifting, body weight exercises such as push-ups). Unfortunately, flexibility is often misunderstood; a commonly over looked component of health that becomes increasingly important as the intensity of your exercise increases and as you age.

Many common exercises combine the three components of fitness. For example, walking is an aerobic exercise that helps the heart and lungs work better but is also a lower body (legs and hips) strength building activity because of the “body weight” carrying aspect of the exercise.

Remember, all physical activity is good for you but for it to be most effective there are certain principles that should be followed.

Cardio Vascular Fitness

To exercise the heart and lungs you should aim for 20 to 30 minutes of continuous exercise with the goal of raising your heart rate over 65% of your maximum heart rate. Your maximum heart rate can be calculated by the following formula $HR_{max} = 220 - \text{age}$.

Muscle Resistance

To increase the strength and endurance of muscles you must follow the “over load principle” which means that a muscle will strengthen when it is exposed to a stimuli greater than it is used to. In formal training, you usually will do 10 to 15 reps / set and do two or three sets. However, any exercise you do that stimulates the muscles in a way that it is not use to will create muscle strengthening adaptations.

Flexibility

The key to improved flexibility is the frequency in which you do it. It is better to stretch 3 times a day for 5 minutes than 1 time a day for 15 minutes. It is best to do dynamic stretching (moving your arms and legs in different directions) before you begin to exercise and static stretching (holding each stretch position for 20 to 30 sec) after you finish exercising. It is important to note that stretching should be done easily and never be painful.