



Why Exercise?

Exercise Isn't a Way of Life Anymore

Exercise seems to not come naturally today; we just don't move much anymore. We drive cars and take elevators to offices where we sit in front of a computer for hour upon hour. Then, we come home and sit in front of a computer for hour upon hour, or we plant ourselves on the sofa for a full night's worth of TiVo. Who would pass that up to exercise?

We must not do much better on the weekends, either. It seems one out of every four Americans gets precious little physical activity during her spare time. An American Medical Association study showed that nearly 25% of us engage in absolutely no physical activity during our leisure time; almost half of the 10,000 adults studied said they do not exercise regularly.

Why We Should Exercise

These are surprising statistics considering the well-known and significant health benefits of exercise. The risk of developing diabetes, heart disease, osteoporosis, and many other health problems is lessened with regular physical activity. Some conditions, such as hypertension and type 2 diabetes, have a direct link to a sedentary lifestyle.

Regular exercise also brings more immediate benefits to nearly every aspect of your life. It improves resistance to infections, joint flexibility, emotional stability, energy and stress levels, and digestion. With continued, regular exercise, you will find that you will move easier, feel stronger, have better posture, and experience less chronic pain (if any at all).

Exercise: The Missing Piece of the Weight Loss Puzzle

Regular physical activity is an absolute necessity when it comes to long-term weight loss success. Dieting can cause muscle mass to be lost, while exercise increases it. **Exercise and healthy eating** will help you lose more weight than dieting alone since muscle burns more calories than fat. Because exercise speeds up your metabolism, you can cut fewer calories from your diet and still lose weight with regular moderate exercise.



Exercise: Just Do It!

When you're starting out, it's easy to get hung up on whether you're exercising long enough or hard enough. A study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association showed that the duration or intensity of exercise isn't as important as you might think.

In a 12-month study, 184 overweight, sedentary women were randomly assigned to 1 of 4 exercise programs in addition to caloric restriction. In the end, the weight loss seen in the subjects was the same among all groups, regardless of the intensity of duration of their exercise regime.

The bottom line: simply adding regular exercise to your diet. You can always work on upping intensity and the length of your workouts down the road.



Exercise and Eating: Balancing it All Out

The key is finding a healthy way of eating that you can live with and that will provide slow and steady weight loss, as opposed to a restrictive diet that brings faster results. You will then find it easier to add exercise to your routine because your body will be receiving the fuel it needs in order to work out.

The good news is just starting out with a slight increase in activity -- like walking the dog or a session of gardening -- can go a long way. It will bring physical and emotional benefits and can help you get in the habit of being more active. Eventually, you can begin setting a daily goal for yourself such as 10 minutes of walking. Those 10 minutes can become three 10-minute sessions a day; in time you will be able to work up to 30 consecutive minutes of exercise!