

A PRESCRIPTION FOR EXERCISE SUCCESS

Exercise is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. Adding exercise to your routine can positively affect your life. Talk to your family doctor about improving your fitness and ask your doctor to write a “prescription” for your fitness success.

BENEFITS OF REGULAR EXERCISE



Reduces your risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, osteoporosis, diabetes, and obesity

Keeps joints, tendons, and ligaments flexible, which makes it easier to move around

Reduces some effects of aging, especially the discomfort of osteoarthritis

Contributes to mental well-being

Helps relieve depression, stress, and anxiety

Increases your energy and endurance

Helps you sleep better

Helps you maintain a normal weight by increasing your metabolism (the rate you burn calories)

MAKE EXERCISE A HABIT

Ask your doctor to write a “prescription” for your exercise program that describes what type of exercise to do, how often to exercise, and for how long

Stick to a regular time every day

Sign a contract committing yourself to exercise

Put “exercise appointments” on your calendar

Keep a daily log or diary of your exercise activities

Check your progress. Can you walk a certain distance faster now? Are you at your target heart rate?

Think about joining a health club or community center. The cost might give you an incentive to exercise on a regular basis



SNEAK EXERCISE INTO YOUR DAY

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator
- Go for a walk during your coffee break or lunch
- Walk part or all of the way to work
- Do housework at a brisk pace
- Work in your yard or garden



HOW MUCH SHOULD I EXERCISE?

Talk to your family doctor about how much exercise is right for you.

A good goal for many people is to work up to exercising 5 times a week for 30 to 60 minutes at a time. If 30 to 60 minutes at a time sounds difficult to fit into a busy schedule, you can split up your physical activity into smaller chunks of time. Try exercising for 10 minutes at a time throughout your day. Remember: exercise has so many health benefits that any amount is better than none.

WHAT IS THE BEST TYPE OF EXERCISE?

The best type of exercise is one that you will do on a regular basis.

Walking is considered one of the best choices because it's easy, safe, and inexpensive. Brisk walking can burn as many calories as running, but it is less likely to cause injuries than running or jogging. Walking doesn't require training or special equipment, except for appropriate shoes. In addition, walking is an aerobic and weight-bearing exercise, so it is good for your heart and helps prevent osteoporosis.

CAN ANYONE EXERCISE?

Everyone can benefit from physical activity.

For most people, it is possible to begin exercising on your own at a slow pace. If you have never exercised before, start with a 10-minute period of light exercise or a brisk walk every day and gradually increase how hard you exercise and for how long. If you have a health problem that is being monitored by your doctor, such as heart disease or osteoarthritis, talk to your doctor before you begin an exercise program. Even if you have a physical disability that limits the ability to move or exercise a part of your body, your doctor can help you find other exercises to improve your overall health.



REFERENCES

All information sourced from FamilyDoctor.org, a resource operated by the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP)