

Diet Alone is Not Enough



There are two all-important components of any healthy lifestyle: Diet and exercise. If you focus on one but neglect the other, you are doomed to frustration as you feel continually unable to meet your weight loss, muscle gain, or other fitness goals. However, if you balance your attention between what you eat and how you exercise your body after eating, you are practically guaranteed to see dramatic success. The body is built for activity, and in today's world we have to try harder than ever to make sure it gets enough. Here are some reasons why exercise matters to you, and how you can start working out—even if you have never done so before.

No Excuses!

It is very easy to think of multiple reasons not to exercise: There's no time for it; it's inconvenient; you don't have the right clothes; you can't afford a gym membership. The truth

is that all of these are just excuses! If you are motivated to get your body moving the way it needs to in order to stay healthy, you can quickly find ways to do it. Sit-ups before breakfast; a chin-up bar installed on a doorway; a jog around the block when you have a half-hour free; and a set of used barbells in the classified ads are just some solutions to the excuses that might come to mind.

Exercise is not something that only fitness enthusiasts and bodybuilders need. You owe it to yourself to make sure your body is prepared for whatever life holds for you. So put away your reasons to avoid exercise and start looking for reasons to enjoy it!

Exercise is necessary for people of all ages and body types. There should be no excuses when it comes to your health and well-being.



LEARN MORE

Make smart decisions about your health and visit a physician or health specialist for advice and questions.

National Library of Medicine Exercise and Physical Fitness

www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/exerciseandphysicalfitness.html

CDC Physical Activity

www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity

EXERCISE MATTERS



HEALTHY DIRECTIONS

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HEALTHY DIRECTIONS



Motivation

Numerous recent studies have given support to what personal trainers, athletic coaches, and military drill instructors have always known: motivation is a huge part of fitness success. Some people have enough will-power of their own to begin and stick with a rigorous exercise plan, but most of us need help from others. Having a regular workout makes it much harder to skip exercise sessions or cut them short. Even a little friendly competition goes a long way to motivate you to do your best.



How to Exercise

The huge number of instructional books, clothing lines, equipment, and other products available can give the wrong impression about exercise. You don't need anything more than a comfortable pair of shoes to get started, and while those other items can make your workouts more effective and enjoyable, you certainly don't need them to get in shape.

Make exercise a fun and social event by engaging friends and family members in your activities. You can improve your health and relationships at the same time.

Exercise Maximizes Healthy Eating

A healthy diet provides your body with vital nutrients that are meant to build up your body's systems. If you do not get enough exercise, though, your body will assume that you don't really need those nutrients and dispose of them (or store them as extra fat!). The body is very efficient, and it will not use energy building up muscles unless you are using those muscles on a regular basis. Therefore, the best way to ensure that your efforts to eat healthy benefit you is to exercise frequently.

Obstacles to Exercise

Exercise is becoming more popular in the U.S., thanks to the influence of weight-loss television shows and encouragement from celebrities. Still, the hectic pace of society makes it difficult to find time for exercise. There are opportunities, though, in almost anyone's schedule, as long as they are willing to cut out something less important. For example, in the space of your favorite one-hour TV show, you could fit an extensive workout in. In fact, you may be able to watch the show while you exercise. Instead of stopping at the bar after work, replace it with a gym visit. Overcoming obstacles to exercise is all about replacing old habits with newer, healthier ones.

Like many other activities, the best way to start exercising is to just jump in. Try walking around your neighborhood, doing some sit-ups and push-ups in your living room, and running a flight of steps a few times in a row. As you start exercising, you will have questions about what you are doing. Since no two bodies are alike you should seek, medical advice when developing any exercise routine and consider working with a certified trainer.

Benefits of Exercise

It goes without saying that exercise yields many benefits for your body. For one thing, you will look better than ever before. You may find your social life transformed as your physique improves, because you will increase self-esteem and confidence which will encourage you to meet new people and try new experiences. Taking charge of your own health and achieving fitness goals will make you feel good about yourself like never before.

Exercise during your active years plays a critical role in warding off a long list of diseases when old age approaches. Diabetes, obesity, heart trouble, mental decay, bone disease, and many other illnesses are far less common in people who exercised regularly during their younger years. Even for the elderly, it's not too late to start exercising! Scientists have shown that even a small amount of walking each week lowers seniors' risk of becoming sick.

Exercise Warnings

Beginning an exercise program for the first time will start your body on a course toward transformation. Trying to rush that transformation, though, is dangerous; your body needs time to adjust to the changes you are making. Just keep in mind that

there is no fast track to lasting, healthy weight loss or muscle gain; slow and steady truly wins the race.

Beginning exercisers frequently suffer injuries to their muscles as they suddenly try to push them past their limits. Take time to stretch before or after exercising, and don't ignore the signals your body is giving you during your workout. If an activity hurts, it is doing you more harm than good.

Finally, if you have existing health conditions, consult your doctor before making major changes to your exercise schedule. The best workout for your spouse or friends might not be right for you.

Keep it Up!

Exercise and fitness is an ongoing process. Just as the perfect physique can't be obtained overnight – inconsistent workouts will not result in measureable results. Keep motivated by including friends and family in your routines. Make achievable goals along the path to your main objective. With focus and consistency, you can make exercise the best habit of your life.

