



Why Should I Exercise?

MU Patient Education Series

WHY SHOULD I EXERCISE?

Exercise is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. Exercise helps reduce health problems, builds strength, gives you more energy, and can help you reduce stress. It can also help you maintain a healthy body weight and curb your appetite. Adding exercise to your weekly routine can affect your life positively.

BENEFITS OF EXERCISE:

- Reduces your risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, osteoporosis, diabetes, and obesity
- Keeps joints, tendons, and ligaments flexible
- Reduces some of the effects of aging
- Contributes to mental well-being and helps treat depression
- Helps relieve stress and anxiety
- Increases energy and endurance
- Improves sleep
- Helps maintain a normal weight by increasing your metabolism (the rate you burn calories)

WHO CAN 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.



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HOW MUCH EXERCISE DO I NEED?

For most healthy adults, a good goal is to exercise 5 times a week for at least 30 minutes each time. However, most people need to start gradually. Start by exercising 2 or 3 times a week for 10- 20 minutes at a time. It really depends on your tolerance. Once you feel comfortable, slowly increase the amount of time and the number of days a week that you exercise.

HOW HARD DO I HAVE TO EXERCISE TO GAIN HEALTH BENEFITS?

Even small amounts of exercise are better than none at all. Start with an activity you enjoy and can do comfortably. Learn to take your pulse and monitor your heart rate. To take your pulse, gently rest 2 fingers on the side of your neck, about halfway between your ear and your chin, and count the beats for 10 seconds. Multiply this number by 6 to get the number of beats per minute. For example, if you are sitting still and count 12 beats over 10 seconds, multiply 12 x 6 to get 72 beats per minute.

TRACK YOUR PROGRESS:

Keep a record of your workouts to track your progress. Write down how long you exercised and what you did. Free websites are available to track your progress, as well as apps for smartphones.

FIND AN EXERCISE PARTNER:

Working out with a partner is more fun than working out alone. An exercise partner can keep you motivated when you don't feel like exercising. You will be much less likely to cancel exercise if you know someone is counting on you to be there. And when you reach your exercise goals, you'll have someone to celebrate with.

MEDICAL RELEASE:

Regardless of the type of exercise you would like to do, always seek the consultation of a medical doctor or licensed healthcare provider to assess what is best for your individual exercise routine.

DISCLAIMER:

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