

What is fitness?

Fitness means being in good physical condition or being healthy. Fitness means having more energy and better sleep patterns. A person who is fit is also able to carry out tasks more easily.



Why should I be fit?

Fitness may help prevent certain diseases such as high blood pressure, diabetes, stroke, cancer, and heart disease. If you already have one of these diseases, you may be able to better control it if you are fit. To be more fit you may need to make some changes in your eating and exercise habits.

How can I make some healthy changes?

It is not easy to change eating and exercise habits. A first step is to decide that health and fitness are important to you. This will make it easier for you to make time in your day to prepare healthy foods and exercise regularly.

To help improve your eating habits:

- Choose a variety of foods from all the food groups including fruit, vegetables, whole grains, low fat milk products, and lean meats.
- Choose foods that are high in fiber (fruit, vegetables, whole grains). Limit foods that are high in fat and sodium. Use herbs and spices to add extra flavor to foods.
- Learn to say “no” to second helpings when you are not hungry. Include a snack between meals only when you are hungry.
- Ask how foods are prepared in restaurants. Fried foods have more fat than baked or broiled foods. Ask for salad dressings and margarine “on the side” so you can use smaller amounts.
- Do include foods that may be higher in fat but only in small amounts and only as an occasional treat.
- Read food labels to help you learn about portion sizes, calories, fat, sodium, and fiber in various foods.
- Keep a daily food diary to help keep you on track.
- Set goals for making changes. Give yourself credit for even small changes.

To help improve your exercise habits:

- If you are over 40 or have a medical problem, see your doctor before you start exercising.
- Make sure you have comfortable shoes that fit well.
- Find an exercise partner (if you choose), and stick to a regular time to exercise.
- Plan for indoor exercise on “bad weather” days.
- Try to “sneak in” extra activity.
- Walk the stairs instead of using the elevator
- Park farther away from work or the store and walk the extra distance
- Take a few minutes more to walk at the mall after shopping
- Put laundry away piece by piece from the laundry room
- Walk in place or up and down stairs during television commercials
- Keep a daily exercise diary.
- Choose an exercise or activity that is fun. You are more likely to do exercise which you enjoy.

- Start out slowly with 5 to 10 minutes. Add 5 minutes every few days until you are burning between 1500 and 2000 calories each week. Burning this many calories may be easier than you think.

The chart below gives some exercises which would help a 150 pound man or woman burn between 1500 and 2000 calories each week. (If you weigh more than 150 pounds. you will burn more calories.) You can mix and match the exercises.

Try to do at least one exercise every day.

Exercise	Minutes per day
Walking (3 miles per hour)	55-70
Swimming laps	20-25
Jogging	25-35
Aerobics (easy)	40-50
Skiing, downhill, light	40-50
Bicycling, light	30-40
Treadmill	30-40
Stair stepper	30-40
Horseback riding	45-65
Dancing	65-85
Walking the dog	55-70
Bowling or playing frisbee	65-85
Cleaning house	40-55
Raking leaves	45-65
Mowing lawn	40-55

Source: Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise 25:71, 19~3)

Even if you cannot exercise every day, do what you can. Remember *a little exercise is better than no exercise*.

What is most important is that you find activities and exercise you like to do and healthy foods you like to eat. This will help you to get started on the road to fitness.

My Fitness Plan:

Talk with my doctor about exercise:

Type of exercise I will do:

Food changes I will make:

Start date:

Brochure developed by Dr. Sharileda Vance. © 1997
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