

Is Fitness Better Than Fatness?

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"Lack of activity destroys the good condition of every human being while movement and methodical physical exercise save and preserve it." ---Plato

After reading a recent study conducted by the world-renowned Cooper Institute. I would like to share with my fellow readers what I have found. Research suggests that carrying some extra weight might not be as bad for you as you think! The studies showed that overweight individuals whose body fat percentage was greater than 27 died earlier than the normal weight individuals. However, when fitness levels were examined, the overweight individuals who were fit were found to live as long as they're thinner fit counterparts. Unexpectedly, the normal weight individuals who were unfit died prematurely at a rate three times higher than that of the individuals who were overweight but fit.

Does this mean that fitness not fatness is what really counts? The tendency of overweight individuals to be sedentary has lead us to believe that if one is fat, one is unhealthy. Then we assumed that to get healthy, we must lose weight. The bottom line is activity, not being a slave to your bathroom scale. It is of great benefit for everyone, normal weight or overweight, to begin and maintain an exercise program that will last a lifetime. **Start off slow with your emphasis on the health and longevity benefits of a regular exercise program, not weight loss!!!**

Before you begin your exercise program, it is a good idea to ask your self a few very important questions. This will allow you to set goals that are attainable and realistic.

Why do you want to start exercising?

What do you expect to the result of your exercise program?

When will you find the time in your busy schedule to exercise?

Where will I exercise?

Will I make a commitment to myself to give exercise a chance, even if I don't see remarkable changes immediately?

A basic strength training program that consists of one to three sets of 8-15 reps of exercises for all the major muscle groups, two to three days per week (alternating days with cardiovascular exercise) Muscle strength and muscle endurance work together to make it easier to climb stairs, carry objects, and perform any tasks or sport that requires sustained exertion. **Toned, firm muscles also give your body physical beauty and muscle definition.**

A daily stretching program includes each major joint to enhance flexibility. The ability to move limbs through the full range of motion counteracts stress on the body, which makes work and plays easier and helps keep you injury-free. **Flexibility allows you to move with coordination and ease.**

Cardiovascular exercise promotes a healthy heart. Incorporate 30 minutes or more of moderate-intensity activity into your daily routine on most days of the week. Walking on the beach, yard work, cycling for transportation or climbing stairs at the office will do the trick. Aerobic exercise is the key to overall good health. It provides the energy and stress release that enhances daily living. It controls weight and body fat levels, fights the risk factors of heart disease, as well as speed up your metabolism.

Doing too much too fast: The kind of killer intensity workouts that cause discomfort, soreness, and attrition are not the kind of workouts that you will be able to do for a lifetime. Moderate-intensity (or higher) exercise and a sensible lifestyle lead to significant health benefits in every system of the body. Listen to what your body is telling you. If you are too sore after a workout, modify the next workout so you can slowly improve.

Hire a certified personal trainer. The two most well known certifications are American Council of Exercise (ACE) and American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM). Ask for references. Hourly rates vary depending on experience level of the trainer and the trainer's facility. Make sure that you are comfortable with the facility and it is conveniently located. Interview several trainers. Choose one that you feel will help you achieve your goals and that you will enjoy working with. Keep in mind that your ultimate goal is to be your own personal trainer.

Put your health into your own hands. Get Fit!

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