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Exercise and Health

How many times are you going to have to endure the constant barrage about exercise and how it helps every aspect of your health and well-being? Well, one more time - from me. Yes, I know you're sick and tired of it, but if you do what you've been told to do, you WON'T be sick and tired all the time!

Benefits? Let me count the ways...

- 1. Lowers blood pressure
- 2. Decreases your blood sugar level-read risk of diabetes.
- 3. Decreases cholesterol levels.
- 4. Makes you look good, feel good.
- 5. Improves sleep, endurance, mental sharpness

Advances world peace... well, alright, maybe not but you get the picture. What a lot of folks don't know is that regular exercise contributes to a lowering of your metabolic rate, which in turn continues caloric breakdown even if you're NOT exercising! But before you reach those lofty heights, you have to start. What to do? Well, I'm glad you asked.

Actually, WHAT to do doesn't matter. What is important is DOING whatever you decide is the best exercise for your needs. Whether it be racquetball, basketball, badminton... performing the exercise is, by far, the most important thing that you can do. Granted, 1 hour of intense swimming followed by resistance training will get you more than 30 minutes of brisk walking. But for the purposes of good health maintenance and cardiac health, those 30 minutes you spend walking are more than enough.

Having a choice of exercise is good, but to be fair, you have to be cognizant of the different benefits each type will bring you. Aerobic exercise is your typical running/walking/jogging variety and anaerobic involves some sort of resistance training, i.e., weight lifting, calisthenics, etc. Ideally, a combination of both should be employed to give you the maximum benefits. As a bonus, consider that resistance training continues to burn calories several hours after you're done! And no, ladies, you will NOT become "musclebound" if you decide this is something you'd like to try.

Now that we've decided that exercise is great and jogging is what calls to you, we have to decide how long and often to do this. Remember, baby steps at first. Don't try to get in shape by next Thursday! Rather, think of this a marathon instead of a sprint that you will be involved in for the rest of your natural days. Because of this it is imperative that you get checked out by your physician PRIOR to starting, especially if you have any existing medical issues like high blood pressure or if you've been a couch potato for a long time and you in the "middle-age" range. Once you get the green light, then go for it - slowly!

Remember, you get out what you put in. Although any exercise will give you tremendous benefits, the more intense and/or lengthy the endeavor, the more calorie burning/cardiac conditioning you will see. Example: walking at a brisk 4-5 miles an hour will net you about 400-450 calories/hr; swim for an hour and you'll lose 600-650 calories/hr. Keep in mind that there are 3500 calories in each pound, so, again, don't expect to see results tomorrow. But see results you will as long as you keep at it.

The more intense and/or lengthy the endeavor, the more calorie burning/ cardiac conditioning you will see. Lastly, please warm up and cool down appropriately. Do NOT stretch PRIOR to exercisecold muscles do not take well to this. Instead, do whatever you're planning on at a much lighter intensity for 5 minutes or

so to get the proverbial blood pumping. AFTER you've finished working out, THEN cool down with some total body stretches.

So, where's the down side to all of this? ...still thinking. That's right, there really aren't. So what are you waiting for? Go get healthy!

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