Getting Started

Helpful Information on Physical Activity

Exercise is important for a multitude of reasons.

It can help decrease the risk of developing conditions, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, osteoporosis, diabetes, colon cancer, and obesity.

It can help reduce the risk of having a second heart attack. Exercise has beneficial effects on total blood cholesterol, triglycerides, and high density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol.

It can help increase energy and endurance and, by increasing metabolism, can help maintain normal weight.

It can help relieve stress and anxiety, contributing to mental well-being and has also been shown to help treat depression.

Lastly, exercise can help the elderly. It not only reduces some of the effects of aging, but also keeps joints, tendons and ligaments flexible, making it easier to move around. There is also an increase in strength and balance.

The bad news is that people still are not getting enough exercise.
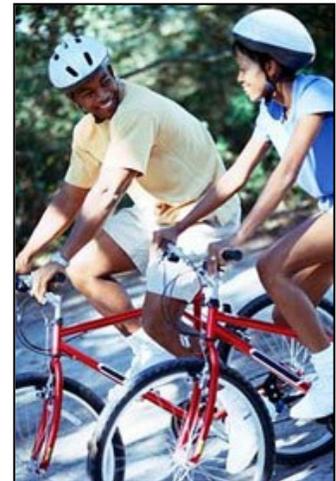
Defining Some Terms

- <u>Physical activity</u> can be defined as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that results in an expenditure of energy.

- <u>Exercise</u> can be defined as a subset of physical activity that is planned, structured, repetitive, and purposeful. The three types of exercise are: aerobic, anaerobic and resistance.

Aerobic
Brisk walking, dancing, jogging, bicycling, skating, swimming, snow shoveling, lawn mowing, leaf raking, and vacuuming

Anaerobic
Baseball, sprinting, tennis, weight lifting, leg lifts, arm circles, curl-ups, dusting, doing laundry, and washing windows

Physical Activity: Who benefits and how?

Everyone can benefit in some way by regular physical activity. Whether you are trying to maintain a weight loss or just feel more energetic when you incorporate exercise into your daily activities. There are also the benefits later in life from exercising, which include reductions in the risk of developing chronic diseases.

- **Older Adults**
  No one is too old to enjoy the benefits from regular physical activity. Evidence indicates that muscle-strengthening exercises can work to reduce the risk of falling and fracturing bones, and can improve the ability to live independently.

- **Parents and children**
  Parents can help their children maintain a physically active lifestyle by providing them with encouragement and opportunities for exercise. Outings and family events are encouraged, particularly when everyone in the family is involved in the activity.

- **Teenagers**
  Regular physical activity improves strength, builds lean muscle, and decreases body fat. Activity can build stronger bones to last a lifetime.

- **Individuals trying to manage their weight**
  Regular physical activity helps to burn calories while preserving lean muscle mass. Regular physical activity is an important component to any weight loss or weight maintenance program.

- **Individuals with high blood pressure**
  Regular physical activity helps to lower blood pressure.

- **Individuals with physical disabilities, including arthritis**
  Regular physical activity for individuals with chronic, disabling conditions is important because it can help improve their stamina and muscle strength. It can also improve their quality of life by improving their ability to perform daily activities.

- **Everyone under stress**
  Regular physical activity has been shown to improve one's mood, help relieve depression, and increase feelings of well-being.
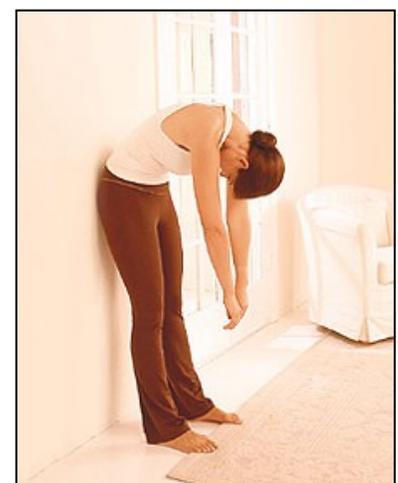
First, speak to your doctor before starting an exercise program!

This is particularly important if you:
- Are elderly
- Currently smoke
- Have any health problems
- Are overweight or obese
- Have not been active in the past
- Are currently pregnant
- Are unsure of your health status
- Feel pain in your chest, joints, or muscles during activity

When a doctor has cleared you to begin an exercise program, you want to start out slowly. Walking is a good way to begin. Start with a 10-minute period of light exercise or a walk every day. You can then gradually increase the intensity of the exercise and the duration.

Ways to Improve Your Health

- Walking or jogging
- Swimming
- Bicycle riding
- Group exercises
- Weight-bearing exercises, such as weight lifting, resistance bands, or activities involving the whole body
- Stretching, such as yoga or tai chi exercises.
- Participation in active sports, such as tennis, basketball, and soccer

Ways to Add Activity to Your Day

- Park the car in the furthest spot from the entrance and walk the extra distance
- Get off of the bus one stop before your destination and walk the extra distance
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator
- Take walking breaks during the work day
- Take a 10-minute walk during lunch break
- Walk a dog or play outside with the kids
- Dance to your favorite music
- Use housecleaning as an exercise opportunity
- Ask a friend, family member, or coworker to walk with you
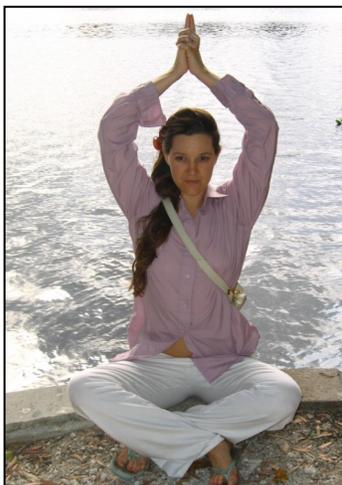
⭐ **Do not begin an exercise program without first consulting your doctor!**

Current Recommendations

Current recommendations on physical activity for adults include one of the following two choices:

- Adults should engage in moderate-intensity physical activities for at least 30 minutes on 5 or more days of the week (CDC/American College of Sports Medicine). It is important to note that 30 minutes of physical activity can be accumulated in bouts of 10 minutes throughout the day.

- Adults should engage in vigorous-intensity physical activity 3 or more days per week for 20 or more minutes per occasion (Healthy People 2010).

Moderate Intensity Activity: What is it?

A good example of a moderate intensity exercise would be brisk walking. Moderate-intensity activities are usually associated with slight increases in breathing and heart rate. One way to tell if you are performing a moderate-intensity activity is that you may not be able to carry on a very long conversation with ease. Examples of other moderate-intensity activities include swimming, cycling, dancing, and doubles tennis.

Pennington Nutrition Series, Number 6, 2006

Authors:
Heli Roy PhD, RD
Shanna Lundy, BS
Beth Kalicki
Division of Education
Phillip Brantley PhD, Director
Pennington Biomedical Research Center
Claude Bouchard PhD, Executive Director

Revised : 10/09

References:

- Aerobic or Anaerobic? Quick activity. Available at: http://www.americanheart.org/
- Physical Activity and Weight Control. Available at: http://win.niddk.nih.gov/publications/physical.htm
- Exercise: A Healthy Habit to Start and Keep. Available at: http://familydoctor.org
- JAMA Patient Page. Available at: http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/294/23/3048
- Physical Activity. Available at: http://womenshealth.gov
- Physical Activity for Everyone. Available at: http://www.cdc.gov/
- Exercise: When to check with your doctor first. Available at: http://www.mayoclinic.com

The Pennington Biomedical Research Center is a world-renowned nutrition research center.

Mission:
To promote healthier lives through research and education in nutrition and preventive medicine.

The Pennington Center has several research areas, including:

Clinical Obesity Research
Experimental Obesity
Functional Foods
Health and Performance Enhancement
Nutrition and Chronic Diseases
Nutrition and the Brain
Dementia, Alzheimer's and healthy aging
Diet, exercise, weight loss and weight loss maintenance

The research fostered in these areas can have a profound impact on healthy living and on the prevention of common chronic diseases, such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, hypertension and osteoporosis.

The Division of Education provides education and information to the scientific community and the public about research findings, training programs and research areas, and coordinates educational events for the public on various health issues.

We invite people of all ages and backgrounds to participate in the exciting research studies being conducted at the Pennington Center in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. If you would like to take part, visit the clinical trials web page at www.pbrc.edu or call (225) 763-3000.