



Exercise: Part 2

by BHHEC Staff

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Basic Health-Fitness Exercise Recommendations:

The following are recommendations for the minimal amount of exercise required for producing the benefits described in part one.

- Aerobic activity:
 - 3 to 5 times per week
 - 20 to 60 minutes per session
- Resistance training:
 - 2 times per week
 - 8 to 15 reps per exercise
- Stretching:
 - 3 to 5 times per week, include all muscle groups.

Aerobic Exercise

Aerobic exercise appears to be beneficial even at fairly low intensities. But the lower the intensity, the longer the workout duration needs to be. In other words, 20 minutes per session is enough if you are working at a high intensity. If you are walking at a moderate pace, 45 minutes to an hour would be a better length. To receive benefit and truly make the exercise “aerobic” you need to get your heart rate up to a certain point.

Knowing your target heart rate is helpful. Target heart rate is a range of heart rate that allows one’s heart and lungs to receive the most benefit. Everyone’s target heart rate is different, depending on their age, current fitness level and health considerations.

Of course, you will want to be sure any changes you make in your exercise program are right for you, and that you are performing new exercises safely and effectively. Check with your doctor if you have health risk or concerns.

Every Activity Counts:

In addition to the basic recommendations given above, daily activity of every kind contributes to physical fitness and good health. Taking the stairs instead of the elevator, walking to complete errands, volleyball on the beach, working in the garden, playing with the kids -- all burn calories and contribute to a high-energy lifestyle that reduces risk of heart disease.

Start Slowly:

If you are new to exercise, build your exercise program gradually. You are in it for the long haul - it's a lifetime activity that counts. Ask a fitness professional for help designing a program that is right for you, one that takes into consideration your health concerns and fitness goals. Your objective for the first few months is to stay injury-free and healthy, and set up a routine that's going to become a lifelong habit.

The bottom line is: "**Anything is better than nothing!**"

Do these recommendations seem overwhelming? Start small! Perhaps two exercise sessions per week that includes some aerobic exercise, 10 to 15 minutes of weight work and five minutes of stretching. Maybe a walk on the weekend. This routine would contribute significant health benefits over the years.

Resistance Training

Resistance training is best done three times a week, full body. Or you may choose to do it every day, one day doing exercises for the lower body and the next day upper body exercises. Never strength train a muscle two days in a row. The muscles need time to rest. It is actually during the rest period that the muscles become stronger. Make sure that you do an exercise for each muscle group and aim for 8-15 repetitions. Sometimes you may do as many as 20 repetitions. Higher repetitions build muscular endurance and lower repetitions build more strength. You can use resistance machines, free weights, exercise bands and even your own body weight to do strength training.

Stretching

Stretching is important for keeping the body flexible and limber. Try to do some stretching every day. It is helpful to have a good outline to follow when doing a stretching routine. Static stretching is the most common type of stretching. With this method, hold each stretch for 30 seconds to 1 minute. Never stretch cold muscles as this can result in injury. Stretching is best done after a light warm up of aerobic type exercise. When stretching wear loose clothing that won't interfere with movement. Use this time to relax.

Black Hills Health and Education Center is a medical wellness retreat offering wellness programs and lifestyle change in a beautiful setting of the Black Hills in South Dakota. BHHEC is unique in that it offers a Christian based lifestyle program that includes everything from lodging and meals, physicals and comprehensive blood work, to daily treatments, exercise sessions with a personal trainer in the gym, classes presented by physicians, the Dietician, the Fitness Director, and other staff, cooking classes, sightseeing tours (Mt. Rushmore, Crazy Horse, Custer State Park Wild Animal Game preserve) and aquatics classes at the lovely swim center in Rapid City. Also included are counselling and stress-relief classes.