



## EXERCISE, WHERE DO I BEGIN?

The first and most important lesson to learn when beginning to exercise is to educate yourself! Learn about the benefits of physical activity, the importance of all components of physical activity, and the importance of technique and overall wellness (mind, body and spirit).

Health Canada introduced Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Living to help Canadians make wise choices about physical activity as a way to improve health. Recommendations of the guide are as follows:

**Endurance** - On 4-7 days a week, perform continuous activity for your heart, lungs and circulatory system. Time required for cardiovascular improvement depends on effort.

**Flexibility** - On 4-7 days a week, perform gentle reaching, bending, and stretching to keep muscles relaxed and joints mobile.

**Strength** - On 2-4 days a week, perform resistance exercise to strengthen muscles and bones to improve posture.

## Benefits of Physical Activity

### Disease Prevention:

- Heart disease, diabetes, obesity, stroke

### Psychological Benefits:

- Decreased stress, improved energy levels
- Improved self-confidence and body image

### Physiological Benefits:

- Maintains healthy blood pressure and resting heart rate
- Weight loss, healthy vivid skin
- Increased energy
- Improved sleeping patterns

### Work Related Benefits:

- Reduced illness
- Fewer sick days
- Improved productivity
- Increase in employee morale

## Components of Fitness

*An ideal exercise program should include the following 3 components:*

1. Cardio Respiratory Endurance
2. Flexibility
3. Muscular Strength and Endurance Training





## **Cardio Respiratory Endurance**

### *Recommended Activity:*

- *Exercise 30 minutes at a moderate level 3-4 times per week*

Cardiovascular exercise is important for good heart health, and helps to lower risks associated with heart disease. Cardio exercise helps to promote a lean body, and can substantially improve your levels of energy and overall health.

- You need to participate in at least one aerobic exercise activity that requires 30 minutes of CONTINUOUS exercise.

Remember, cumulative exercise counts! If one half hour of continuous exercise is difficult for you, try exercising for 10 minutes 3 times a day. Start slowly, and build your way up to longer, more intense bouts of cardiovascular training.



## **Cardio Ideas at Home**

Including cardio in your daily life is easier than you may think, and can be done without fancy equipment, and in the comfort of your own home. Use some of the activities below to increase your cardiovascular activity at home and to replace long periods of inactivity such as watching TV.

- Use a low stair to do step-ups
- Jumping/jogging on the spot
- Go for a walk or run
- Go for a bike ride
- Jump rope
- Climb stairs

## **Cardio Ideas at Work**

Much of your waking day is spent at your workplace, so incorporating cardio while at work will not only help you to increase your daily activity level, but will improve your focus and energy while on the job. Use some of the activities below to increase your cardiovascular activity while at work.

- Go for a walk or run around your building
- Park in the farthest spot from the entrance
- Walk or ride your bike to work
- Take the stairs, not the elevator, or try taking 2 steps at once
- Request active tasks such as deliveries
- Visit coworkers in far corners of your building or office space

*Tip! If your workplace requires you to wear non-athletic footwear, try to keep a pair of running shoes at work or in your car.*



### **Cardio Ideas at the Health Club**

Health clubs can help to make cardiovascular activity easier by providing space and cardio equipment. Hiring a personal trainer is a great way to get set up on a cardio program, and will ensure you are using the equipment safely.

- Aquatic classes
- Aerobics classes
- Cardiovascular equipment (stairs, treadmill, elliptical, rowing machine)
- Ride your bike or walk to the gym

### **Aerobic Cardio Targeted for Weight Loss**

Conducting intense aerobic exercise a couple times a week will help stimulate fat loss. It is often thought that doing lower intensity aerobics for 40-60 minutes is the best way to burn fat. In reality, training at a lower intensity keeps your metabolism elevated for only about an hour after you finish. Higher intensity cardio can keep your metabolism elevated much longer.

To really increase your metabolism and lose body fat you need to train with higher intensity aerobics for 20-25 minutes. Intensity can be achieved through interval training. Interval training is altering your level of intensity minute by minute. Change your levels of intensity every minute from warm up to hard effort to medium effort, hard, medium, low..... Make sure you give yourself a couple of minutes for cool down, keeping the blood flowing, while allowing your heart rate to come back down.

*\*See the attached Fitness Tip sheet for a sample interval workout.*

## **STRENGTH TRAINING**

*Recommended Activity:*

- *Exercise with weights or resistance 2-4 times per week*

Strength training is very important for maintaining strong bones and muscles, and plays a vital role in weight loss and body composition. Strength training involves exercises that use resistance against your muscles.

### **Strength Training Ideas at Home**

Strength training can be very beneficial using only your own body weight. Try to incorporate some of the following strength exercises at home.

- Pushups (try from your knees first)
- Walking lunges, static squats
- Wall squats
- Carrying groceries
- Abdominal exercises such as crunches/planks
- Raking & other yard work
- Yoga & Pilates

Tip! Using resistance bands or free weights is a great way to incorporate strength training at home. However, if you don't have these items, anything with a bit of weight will work as well. (try soup cans!)





### **Strength Training Ideas at Work**

- Wall squats
- Wall pushups
- Contract your glute & core muscles while sitting at your desk
- Triceps dips
- Calf raises

Any movement that puts resistance on your muscles can be considered strength training - think about push and pull motion. Remember, every movement counts! Pushups, wall squats, lunges - find a spot in the staff room, close your office door, or head outside for 5 minutes. It all adds up!

### **Strength Training Ideas at the Health Club**

Proper form with strength training is very important. Hiring a personal trainer will help you to learn the proper technique and will help to lower your risk of injury.

- Free weights
- Machines
- Resistance classes
- Yoga & Pilates classes
- Water resistance & aquatic classes
- Work one on one with a Personal Trainer

Ask your Health Club for class schedules and descriptions

### **Strength Training Considerations For Beginners**

1. On average people lose 5-7 lbs of muscle per decade, specifically those who do not perform strength training.

2. Muscle loss translates into a decrease in metabolic rate.

3. Strength training replaces muscle and increases metabolism, which is important for any body composition goal.

4. At rest, muscles burn more calories than fat, which helps to increase your metabolic rate. The more muscle you build the more calories you burn.

5. Resistance training helps in overall functionality, injury prevention, and recovery.

5. Improving your body composition by strength training will improve your body image, and reduce the risk of depression.

6. Resistance training improves sleeping patterns. You are less likely to suffer from insomnia if you are strength training on a regular basis.

7. Resistance work will boost your stamina. You will find you fatigue less easily when you strength train.

8. Strength training reduces the risk of colon cancer by improving the transit process of your digestive system.





## **Flexibility Training**

### *Recommended Activity:*

- Perform gentle reaching, bending, and stretching exercises 4-7 days per week
- Hold each stretch for 15-30 seconds – no bouncing!

Flexibility training is a very important and often neglected component of physical fitness. Improving your flexibility will help to speed your recovery after a workout, improve circulation and posture, improve sleeping patterns, increase your range of motion, and lower your risk of injury. Stretching exercises can also help you manage stress levels.

### **Flexibility Training Ideas at Home, at Work, and at the Health Club**

Stretching exercises can be performed in the comfort of your own home, while on the job, or at your local gym.

*Tip! Yoga and Pilates classes are a great way to learn proper stretching techniques. Check out class schedules at the Health Club, or hire a Personal Trainer to aid you in developing a flexibility routine.*

Remember, stretching is best performed when your muscles are warm, so start with a 5 minute walk or jog. Use stretching as part of your warmup and cooldown routine, or as a relaxation tool. Set daily and weekly goals to perform the following flexibility exercises.

**Head Circles:** Make  $\frac{1}{4}$  circles with your head. Start with your ear near your shoulder on one side, rotate your head around to the front, ending with your ear near the shoulder on the other side.

**Arm Circles:** One arm at a time, make backward arm circles with your palms facing out, thumb pointed up. Reverse the motion by facing your palms in.

**Hip Stretch:** Stand up, half step back with the right foot. Bend your left knee and shift your weight back to your right hip. While keeping the right leg straight, bend forward more and reach down your right leg.

**Quadriceps Stretch:** Stand erect, holding onto a wall for support. Bend your knee behind you so that you can grasp your foot, holding your heel against your glutes. Push your knee gently back as far as you can, using your hand to keep the heel in place. (If more comfortable, use the hand from the opposite side).

**Calf Stretch:** Stand at arm's-length from the wall/post. Lean into wall/post, bracing yourself with your arms. Place one leg forward with your knee bent - this leg will have no weight put on it. Keep your other leg back with your knee straight and heel down. Keeping your back straight, move hips toward wall until you feel a stretch.

**Achilles Stretch:** From the calf stretch position, bend your back knee so that the angle is changed to stretch the Achilles tendon.

**Leg Extensions:** Use your hand to stabilize yourself facing the wall. Bending at the knee, bring one leg forward, then extend and swing that leg back and behind. Repeat 10-15 times, then switch legs. Be cautious of hyper extending your lower back.

**Crossover Leg Swings:** Holding onto the wall, face forward. Swing one leg in front of your body (side to side in front) gradually swinging higher. Repeat on opposite side.





## Let's Get Started: Fitness Tips

*Start looking at exercise differently...*

All movement is exercise. Go for a walk, get up and stretch, ride a bike!

### **Baby Steps**

Don't ever adopt the "why bother" attitude. If your fitness level is not where you'd like it to be, start with something you enjoy – light weight lifting, stretching, biking. Before long, you will get your energy back and start feeling like you have really accomplished something. You have to start somewhere!

### **Set Goals**

Set weekly, monthly and yearly goals. Once this is done, write out a plan on how you are going to get there.

### **Set an Agenda**

Challenge yourself by setting a goal such as increasing your weights, frequency, speed or duration. Keep a record of your progress.

### **Measure your Progress**

The Athletic Club offers an annual Fitness Consultation Program. Every 90 days you can measure your progress through a series of testing including muscular endurance and strength, total body measurements, a body composition analysis, cardiovascular assessments, and determination of equipment knowledge.

### **Change it up!**

Your body adapts to routine. To see change in your body, remember to change your exercise routine every few weeks.

### **Get a workout partner**

Having a partner to train with can help you to work harder, feel motivated, and to be honest in your training. This is a great way to develop a level of fitness accountability.

### **Stay Active**

Take the stairs, stretch at home or go for a walk. Park your car far from entrances, and limit the amount of time you spend doing passive activities such as watching tv.

### **Hire a Pro**

A personal trainer or coach can help you break through mental barriers and set higher goals. They can offer you motivation, knowledge, and hold you accountable for showing up.

### **20 Minute Cardio Blast!**

- 5 minutes light jog (*warmup*)
- 1 minute run (*moderate intensity*)
- 30 seconds sprint (*high intensity*)
- 1 minute walk (*low intensity*)
- 2 minutes run on incline (*moderate to high intensity*)
- 1 minute walk (*low intensity*)
- 1 minute run (*moderate intensity*)
- 30 seconds sprint (*high intensity*)
- 1 minute walk (*low intensity*)
- 2 minutes run on incline (*moderate to high intensity*)
- 5 minutes walk (*cooldown*)

