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Exercise: Why YOU Should Do It

By Aaron M. Potts

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Hundreds of Thousands of Americans spend millions of dollars each year on diet pills, "magical" exercise devices, and misrepresented health and fitness products, when in all actuality a good set of dumbbells and a brisk walk may be all you need to get in better shape than you've ever been in.

What can you do with nothing but a set of dumbbells, you ask? Provide resistance to your body's movements – also known as weight lifting. That's all weight lifting is - resistance. The terms "weight lifting" and "resistance training" have become one in the same because they are describing the same activity - moving your body under more resistance than it normally has to handle.

In fact, you've just stumbled upon the basic secret of exercise in general! Whether you are talking about resistance training, Pilates, Yoga, cardiovascular activities, or any other form of exercise, all of these programs have one thing in common – performing more activity than you would get sitting on the couch. WHY should you exercise, though?

How about defying the aging process for starters? Do you know that the primary reason why elderly people end up in nursing homes is because they lose the ability to think and move on their own? Do you also know that the entire process of thinking and moving on our own happens because we do it every day? Until we retire, that is. Once we don't have to go to work anymore, or deal with scheduling and lifestyle issues, suddenly the only thing that we have to think about is whether to watch game shows or soap operas all day long, and the only exercise we get is deftly flying our fingers over the remote control.

Mush. That's what our brains and bodies turn into when we stop using them. Think you are still sharp as a tack, and at the height of your game? Try to say the alphabet backwards in 30 seconds or less.

Yes.... sharp indeed.

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What about physically? Think that you can still hold your own even though you don't really exercise much? Stop reading this article and drop down on the floor for some correct-form push-ups. Did you do at least 30 if you are female, or at least 40 if you are male? No? How about 20 or 25? 15? Unless you pulled off 30 or 40, you are probably at less than the 50 percentile mark for your gender - health conditions notwithstanding.

Okay, so you've determined that you aren't exactly Olympic athlete material. So what? You don't even like sports, let alone being very good at them. That's fine, and there is nothing wrong with that. So what about fat? Do you like bodyfat? Do you find it physically appealing? Do you think it's healthy? If so, we're done speaking. Go on about your business, and thanks for reading this far.

For everyone else, here is a newsflash: In America today - the year 2004 - obesity related health conditions account for more deaths in the United States each year than all known forms of cancer COMBINED. Heart Disease alone is the number one killer of American adults, and it is a

PREVENTABLE CONDITION!

How about self-esteem? 64% of Americans are overweight. That is almost two-thirds of the population. If you think that a figure like that and the skyrocketing sales of prescription anti-depressants aren't related, you now have a second opportunity to stop reading this article and continue on with your day.

Here is the bottom line, folks: Exercise and a reasonable nutrition program are necessary for ALL people, for their ENTIRE lives. Note, however, that I said "exercise", and that I also said "reasonable nutrition program". At no point did I say anything about spending 2 hours per day at the gym, or about eating nothing but carrots and celery for the rest of your life. Why? Those practices are just as ineffective at long-term weight loss as diet pills and late night infomercial products. Here is what DOES work:

- 1) Weight/Resistance Training - Weight training for both men and women has the same effect - it makes your muscles more metabolically active. In simpler terms, it means your muscles will burn more calories - even when you are sleeping. Muscle is the only site on your body where bodyfat is broken down. Weak muscles = weak metabolism. Weak metabolism = slow calorie burning.
- 2) Cardiovascular Training - Contrary to popular belief, this type of training is meant to help your cardio-respiratory system function more effectively, and ultimately to last longer. Does it burn a lot of calories? Sure it does. However, if you don't combine it with resistance training and supportive nutrition, you'll likely just burn off water weight and the muscle tissue that you worked so hard for up in step number 1.
- 3) Reasonable Nutrition Program - Quality sources of complex and fibrous carbohydrates, essential fatty acids, and lean sources of protein. Eat those nutrients in reasonable proportions frequently throughout your day, and your metabolism (refer again to #1) will crank up to high, and you'll be burning more calories on a day to day basis than you ever have before in your life.

So far we have seen that not only can exercise literally keep us out of a nursing home, but it can also

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keep off excess levels of bodyfat which will - literally - keep us alive. We haven't even touched on sports performance, recreational activities, improved energy levels, ability to focus, or many of the other benefits of a regular exercise program.

Personally, I'd be happy with just staying out of a nursing home, and staying alive long enough to look good in a bathing suit. What about you?

Aaron M. Potts is an ISSA Certified Personal Trainer and Youth Fitness Instructor in Jacksonville, FL. His company, Aaron's Personal Training, provides one on one personal training services, fitness consulting, nutrition counseling, and online personal training services to both local and long distance clients. Find out more about Aaron's Personal Training at

or

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Get Well: Exercise Tips For Fibromyalgia Sufferers

By Kathryn Whittaker

If you suffer from fibromyalgia, it is possible that you will benefit from a carefully constructed exercise program. However, those who have fibromyalgia are often not in the best of shape, so it is important to implement the exercise carefully and with a plan in mind. Here are some exercise tips for fibromyalgia sufferers that can help you to feel better and get your active lifestyle back again.

If you have fibromyalgia, you may not feel like exercising. So, then, why do it? Part of implementing exercise to cope with fibromyalgia is understanding why you would do that.

Exercise can lessen your pain and prevent weakness of your muscles. Endurance exercise, like walking and cycling, can help you become stronger overall and give you additional energy. In a nutshell, exercise will help you feel better overall. As long as you do it the right way, exercise can be one of the most effective treatments for those who suffer from fibromyalgia.

Start Slowly

If you suffer from fibromyalgia, you know that you are not usually energetic and that your body has likely become somewhat stagnant. Because of the blow to your overall physical fitness, you should make sure you start slowly. With that in mind, one of the best exercise tips for fibromyalgia sufferers is to go from low amounts and intensities in your workouts and work up to the higher ones and longer sessions. Helpful exercises for those with fibromyalgia include low impact exercises, walking, and anything that may be designed for those with arthritis. Water exercise classes and programs, in fact, are as good as any for those with fibromyalgia.

Stretch First

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No matter what exercise you choose to help you with your fibromyalgia, you have to stretch first. No matter what, one of the top exercise tips for fibromyalgia sufferers you will get is to stretch. Stretching helps your body warm up before activity begins. Additionally, it is its own type of exercise and can improve blood flow. You will also greatly reduce the risk of injury as you exercise if you remember to stretch first.

Soreness is Okay

Another one of the exercise tips for fibromyalgia sufferers is to expect some soreness. Listen to your body and make sure you don't overdo things, but when you start a new exercise program, you are going to feel some soreness. As you continue your program and become stronger, though, the soreness will likely begin to subside. If, though, the pain gets worse or is intense, then it is time to cut back on the exercise. Additionally, talk to your doctor before you start an exercise program to make sure your fibromyalgia will cause no complications. If he or she gives you the okay then you will be on your way to feeling better and being happier.

With the help of these exercise tips for fibromyalgia sufferers, you can aid in your own treatment. Exercise will help you feel stronger and increase your stamina. Before you know it, if you plan it right, you will be exercising more and feeling your fibromyalgia less. In the end, isn't that the only goal you

really have?

Kathryn Whittaker has an interest in Health & Beauty related topics. To access more information on

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