

Adults and Children:
MOVE That Body!

By Laura Jimenez, M.S.W.

Everybody knows the importance of exercising, but how many people fully comprehend the long-term implications in the decision of whether or not to exercise, how to exercise, what kind and for how long on any given day, week or year. The old adage that a person would have taken better care of their body had they known earlier that they were going to live as long as they did could not be truer. For those who do little or no exercise, it is possible to improve one's short and long-term overall wellness by adding a few exercises to your weekly routine.

We are living in the age of electronics and stagnation. Certainly not all children are getting an ample amount of exercise. The contents of this article are equally important for adults as well as children. Unless your parents instilled the importance of exercising into you from a young age, exercising may seem foreign to you. Don't fret. You will be able to find some form of exercising so that you are MOVING your body.

If you're just beginning a new exercise regime, one of the main factors to keep you coming back for more is to enjoy what you're doing (or at least the results of your hard work). There's biking; hiking; jogging; jump roping; playing basketball soccer, tennis or Wii Fit; rowing; running; walking; doing yoga and many others. Regardless of your exercise of choice, always remember to stretch the muscles you have worked. If you'll forget to stretch after or in between sets, stretch before. Take time to stretch – the more stretching you do, the better it will be for you – particularly to prevent an injury.

Everyone has different time constraints, abilities, limitations, desires, equipment, et cetera. Although it might be nice, you don't need to purchase an expensive gym membership, costly equipment or even hire a trainer. Be careful, use good judgment and listen to your body. The day after you work out, you should feel a little soreness but not a lot of pain. For example, if your abs hurt when you cough, you worked that muscle group too hard the prior day. If something starts hurting or you are out of breath, STOP!

Make sure not to overdo it in the beginning to avoid setting yourself up for failure. Instead, take it slow when you begin and gradually work your way up (by increasing the number of repetitions or overall length of time when you feel that you could do better). If you aim to work out at least every other day, you will be accomplishing a lot but don't feel overwhelmed if you're unable. Take it a day at a time and even if you do less than you had intended, perhaps you can still exercise a little bit (e.g., climbing 2-5 flights of stairs, parking far away from a store entrance (but still safe), stretching for ten minutes before showering to relax or weightlifting a can or jug of milk for a few sets).

Some people keep an exercise journal. You can include your current weight and other numbers such as blood pressure, cholesterol, measurements and/or any other numbers which you want to improve. By including a goal which you're working toward along with a reasonable timeframe to accomplish that goal, the simple act of writing it down often helps many to stay better focused and on track. Besides the numbers, personalize your goal (e.g., I want to have greater flexibility and/or I want to wake up without any pain in the morning). Note: no matter how fit you are, there's always room for improvement.

Bones are said to be strengthened through exercise. This author personally knows someone who literally lost three inches of height. Don't let this be you. Have fun, be safe and exercise. If you can imagine it – you can create it. Your hard work will pay off!

Here are a few websites with tips to keep you moving in this direction:

- 1) <http://life.familyeducation.com/exercise/weight/46770.html>
- 2) <http://familydoctor.org/online/famdocen/home/healthy/physical/basics/059.html>
- 3) <http://www.sparkpeople.com/resource/exercises-printable.asp>