

Aerobic Exercise

Inactivity is reaching "crisis proportions" as the result of a highly technological society that makes it convenient to remain sedentary.

It is now estimated that 60 percent of adult Americans are not physically active on a regular basis. Even more disturbing, one in four Americans is not active at all. Recent findings confirm that fitness is a better predictor of health and longevity than almost any other factor studied.

Definition

Aerobic simply means in the presence of oxygen. Aerobic refers to those types of exercises that require oxygen to burn fat stores for energy.

Aerobic exercise uses the same large muscle groups, rhythmically, for a period of 15 to 20 minutes or longer while maintaining 60-80% of your maximum heart rate.

Examples

Think of aerobic activity as being longer in duration yet moderate in intensity. Aerobic activities include:

- ◆ walking
- ◆ biking
- ◆ jogging
- ◆ swimming
- ◆ aerobic dance classes
- ◆ cross-country skiing
- ◆ cycling

Benefits of Aerobic Exercise

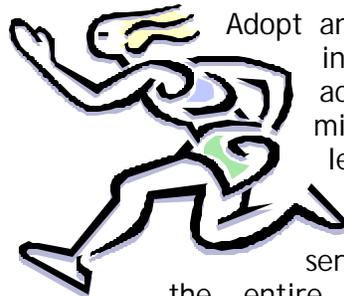
- ◆ increased resistance to fatigue
- ◆ extra energy and stamina`
- ◆ toned muscles and increased lean body mass
- ◆ decreased tension and stress
- ◆ improved quality of sleep

- ◆ psychological benefits - exercise improves mood, reduces depression and anxiety
- ◆ social - exercise is fun and can be shared with friends and partners.
- ◆ control of body fat - aerobic exercise in conjunction with strength training and a proper diet will reduce body fat
- ◆ decreased risk of diseases - hypertension, diabetes, osteoporosis (weight-bearing activities), various cancers, and heart disease.

Getting Started

Pick an activity that first of all is enjoyable and secondly, realistic. Exercise adherence is also improved if other people know about and support the new exercise habit.

Be willing to commit the time and energy to adding this exercise to the routine. Even though intermittent activity is beneficial, structured exercise performed on a regular basis offers even greater advantages.



Adopt an exercise plan that includes cardiovascular activity for at least 20 minutes per session, at least three times per week. End each session with a series of stretches for the entire body. If possible, incorporate a muscular fitness routine to maximize overall fitness level.

In Addition. . .

Anaerobic activity is shorter in duration and higher in intensity. Anaerobic activities include: racquetball, downhill skiing, weight lifting, sprinting, softball, soccer and football. These activities are complementary to an aerobic cardiovascular workout program.

