

Exercise Programs



There are different types of exercise that accomplish different things for the body and the mind. In my mind, a "good" exercise program is one you will do faithfully and happily and includes three categories of exercises: flexibility, endurance, and strengthening exercises.

Flexibility exercises: Flexibility exercises help keep the whole body limber. Stretching the long muscles in the legs, arms, and across the back can improve range-of-motion and the ability to comfortably do necessary daily life activities such as reaching, bending, carrying, lifting, moving, pushing or pulling things.

Endurance exercises: Try walking rapidly (while still being able to talk to a walking partner), Endurance exercises raise the heart rate and get the heart, lungs and circulatory systems working to their highest levels. Having more endurance can build stamina for tasks like climbing the stairs, shopping for groceries, and driving a car. Bicycling, swimming and walking are examples of endurance activities.

Strength exercises--Builds muscle. Just a small increase in muscle mass can reduce frailty, even in 90 year olds. Weight lifting increases one's metabolic rate, helping to keep weight and blood sugar in check. Leg lifts, arm raises, and bicep curls -- build muscles. If you don't have gym like weights, use things you have in your kitchen such as a large can of soup, a pound of beans or sugar. Start low and build up your strength as tolerated. Never start high. It can cause pain and discomfort.

When doing strength exercises, be sure to include balance exercises to build hip and leg muscle strength which can prevent falls--a major cause of broken hips and other injuries that often lead to disability and loss of independence.

STARTING AN EXERCISE PROGRAM

To begin a routine exercise program, consult with your doctor to make sure you have all the physical capabilities to exercise safely. Start your exercise program slowly and build up as your energy levels improve. Choosing activities you will enjoy. If you don't like an activity, don't do it! Do what makes you happy and feels good. You will have a greater chance of sticking with it. Good luck and happy sleeping!

Resources:

<http://www.fitness.gov/mentalhealth.htm>

http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cic_text/health/exercise-heart/index.htm