

Exercise and its Importance for Overall Health

What is Exercise?

Exercise, also known as physical activity, refers to any movement where our body works at a higher intensity level than what we normally do. It aims to improve heart rate, muscle strength and is most commonly performed to achieve physical fitness.

Different Types of Exercise

There are three basic types of exercise namely: aerobic, anaerobic and flexible. Aerobic exercise helps improve oxygen consumption by the body. The word aerobic means "with oxygen" and it permits the energy-generating processes through the use of oxygen. This type of exercise is usually performed at low to moderate levels of intensity over an extended period while the person is at 50-80% of their maximum heart rate (Ainsworth, 2011). Examples of aerobic exercise include running long distances, playing tennis, cycling, walking, and hiking. These type of activities focus mainly on increasing cardiovascular endurance (the ability of your blood vessels, heart and lungs to deliver oxygen throughout the body)



Anaerobic exercise aims to enhance power and muscle strength without the use of oxygen (anaerobic means no oxygen). No oxygen means that the cells exhaust their oxygen supply quickly and therefore, rely on other means of energy production. This kind of training will help the muscles develop and improve their performance using high-intensity activities, which last up to about two minutes. Strength exercise is the most common form of anaerobic exercise that refers to the use of resistance to build muscle strength, endurance and size. The most common method of strength training is weight and resistance exercise that involve weight stacks, plates and dumbbells or machines for muscle contraction. Strength training is beneficial in the improvement of overall health and well-being. It increases bone, muscle, tendon and ligament strength as well as muscle toughness and improved joint function. It decreases the risk of osteoporosis and other bone-related problems.



The last type of exercise is called flexibility exercise that helps improve the range of motion of muscles and joints. Stretching is a one example of flexibility exercise.



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Some guidelines: If you want to schedule exercise five times per week, these recommended guidelines should be followed. For the first four weeks, exercise should be one to three times per week for 20 to 30 minutes at up to 65 percent of your maximum heart rate. For week five to eight, exercise should be three times per week, 30 minutes per day at up to 65 to 75 percent of your maximum heart rate. For week nine to 12, exercise should be four times per week for 30 minutes at up to 65 to 75 percent of your maximum heart rate. For week 12 to 16, exercise should be five times per week for 30 minutes at up to 65 to 75 percent of your maximum heart rate (Glanville, 2013).

To calculate your maximum heart rate or MHR, subtract your age from 220. To determine 65% of your MHR, multiply your MHR by 0.65. To determine 75% of your MHR, multiply your MHR by 0.75. For a 40-year old, their MHR is 180 and 65% of the MHR is 117 beats per minute (BPM). 75% of their MHR is 135 BPM (Suleman, 2014).

Additional Research and Future Issues

Continued research should be conducted to further our knowledge on the benefits of adequate physical activity. More research studies should be provided for better and more efficient exercise inventions that improve long-term compliance to a physically active lifestyle. Innovative, cost-effective methods of increasing physical activity in the community must be developed, implemented, and evaluated if we are to become a fit society.

Reading Comprehension Questions:

1. What is exercise?
2. What is the main difference between aerobic and anaerobic exercise?
3. What is cardiovascular endurance?
4. What is cardiovascular endurance? What kind of activities are done during anaerobic exercise?
5. What is the difference between aerobic and anaerobic exercise?
6. When should you exercise?
7. Why do you think it is important to alternate the type of exercise on a day-to-day basis?
8. What do you think about exercise?
9. Why is exercise important?
10. Why do you think so many people can't maintain their exercise schedule year after year?
11. Find your maximum heart rate. What should your maximum heart rate be if you followed the schedule below and were in week 13?

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