

Better Health... Best Self

Food & Fitness Newsletter

Vernon Park Church of God

1975 E. Joe Orr Road, Lynwood, Illinois 60411

February 2017, Issue 6

BACK TO BASICS—Part 2: Exercise

Reclaim Health Your

Steps...1 - 2 - 3

Many of us take great pride in taking good care of our homes, cars, clothes, and other assets. If something were to happen to one of these possessions, usually, it can be replaced. However, sadly in this country, we tend to neglect the one asset we all possess that is irreplaceable...OUR BODIES. God created our bodies to move and be active...period. It's imperative and God's will for us to have a healthy temple for our spirits to reside in. With our jobs, kids, and daily responsibilities, making time to take care of our physical health can seem next to impossible. But, exercise does not have to be expensive, grueling, and time consuming to be effective...you don't even need a gym membership! The exercises mentioned in this issue can be done indoors and/or outdoors, and cost little to nothing to execute. It's time to get back to taking good care of you. It's time to make regular exercise a real priority in your daily regimen for good health and longevity.

**God
Wants You
Healthy!**

WEIGHT TRAINING

Weight or strength training is *Step 1* essential for both men and women, especially as we grow older. Add weight training to your cardio workout 2 to 3 times a week, you'll thank yourself later! Weight training is one of the best ways to build strength, improve muscle definition, and control bone loss as we age. Lifting weights can help strengthen the metabolism, as well as help retain lean muscle mass and skin elasticity. Another great benefit is that weight training improves motor skills that can reduce injury risk. For safety, avoid exercising the same muscle group two days in a row. Always allow for a 24 hour rest in between weight training sessions. The primary upper-body muscle groups to focus on when weight training are the arms (biceps and triceps), chest (pectorals), shoulders (deltoids), and back (rhomboids, latissimus dorsi, trapezius, etc.). The primary lower-body muscle groups to give attention to include: the thighs (quadriceps and hamstrings), hips (abductors), inner-thigh (adductors) buttocks (gluteus maximus), and calves (gastrocnemius). Lastly, always include abdominal and core work to keep your physical foundation strong. Pilates is a safe and effective core strengthening program.

"...be in
health..."
3 John 1:2

Step 2

CARDIO

-Cardio exercise burns calories, fat, and helps us lose weight, but do we really know why we're supposed to do cardio exercise? Sometimes there's a lot of confusion about what to do and how long to do it for. This can make it hard to develop an effective exercise routine. For maintaining good health, the College of Sports Medicine recommends 30 minutes of moderate intensity exercise-5 days a week, or more intense vigorous cardio exercise 20 minutes a day-3 days a week. However for weight loss, you may need to increase your exercise to 60-90 minutes each session, depending on your diet and other activities. Although exercise classes and cardio machines (treadmill, stationary bike, and elliptical) can be very effective tools for health and weight loss, there are many cost effective cardio exercises that don't require a gym membership. Some of these include walking, power-walking, jogging, jumping rope, jumping jacks, climbing stairs, hiking, swimming, skating, roller blading, and bike riding.



Benefits of Cardio Exercise

- ✓ Stronger heart & lungs
- ✓ Slowing of the aging process
- ✓ Reduced stress
- ✓ Increased flexibility
- ✓ Better sleep
- ✓ Increased bone density
- ✓ Reduced risk of heart disease & some types of cancer
- ✓ Temporary relief from depression and anxiety
- ✓ More confidence about how you feel & look

Step 3 - FLEXIBILITY TRAINING

-Perhaps the most undervalued component of physical exercise, stretching is a vital part of the three tiers of physical fitness (cardio, weights, and flexibility training).

Tips to Safely & Effectively Stretch

- Don't stretch cold muscles; always warm up the body prior to stretching.
- Stretch until a mild tension is felt, then hold.
- On average, hold a stretch for 30-60 seconds, unless otherwise stated.
- Never force a stretch to the point of strain, tingling, numbness, or pain.
- Focus on the stretch, avoiding any distractions.
- Don't hold your breath; breathing freely helps guarantee a better stretch.
- Relax and do not tense the muscle being stretched.

Finally, for the most physical benefit, make sure to cross-train. This is simply switching or mixing up the type of exercise you do on a daily basis. For instance; Monday you may jog, Tuesday you may swim, Wednesday you may weight train, etc. This method will allow you to spice up your workout, avoid boredom, and acquire whole-body fitness by using different muscles for various exercises. Another huge benefit of cross-training is the decreased possibility of reaching a "plateau", where your fitness results can begin to level off and cease to progress. Be disciplined and committed to discovering your best self as you strive for better health.

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Consult your physician before beginning a new exercise regimen or changing your diet.

