

# **Quick Wellness**

# INTRODUCTION

Fit exercise into your busy schedule? That's as absurd as saying that there are eight days in a week. First, you've never exercised before or regularly played a sport. Second, you've never been into the fitness crowd and third, you're far too busy to even think about exercise. In other words, You're just not into it.

Of course your friends talk about it and rave about the latest fitness craze, but you've seen it too often, some of them are on the "onagain-off-again" treadmill / stair master mania, and you wonder why they haven't shed the fat that they're desperately still trying to hide. Seeing what your friends go through and not seeing any results, you cling to the notion that your total lack of interest is justified.

You're not the least bit inclined to engage in these circus-like contortions or do those mindless freestyle strokes in the water. That would only encroach into your already busy schedule of juggling family, home and career. These three combined – husband/children/work are your exercise.

Before tackling the idea of fitting exercise into your busy schedule, it

might be better if we start with the concept of self-assessment and then familiarize ourselves with the disease-prevention aspect of exercise.

Once you've accepted the fact that exercise is good for your health, then you can consider some of the ways you can include it into your life.

# SECTION 1: ASSESSING PHYSICAL DAMAGE AND ACCEPTING THE IMPORTANCE OF EXERCISE

# **Lifespan and Physical Appearance**

The average life span is 80 years, give or take a few years. The truth is, a significant number of people look and feel 80 before their time. They have:

sagging dry skin unsightly posture an uneven and unsteady walk aching joints

If their outward appearance is bad, imagine what the inside machinery is like. Most likely, it's even worse:

clogged blood vessels heart problems mounds of sugar and fat parked in or around vital organs Conditions such as diabetes, nervous tension, high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease that are silently brewing. If fitness authorities had it their way, they'd create legislation to make exercise mandatory as soon as a baby leaves the cradle, not during the teenage years when obesity is likely to strike.

But fitness shouldn't be associated with any age. You can start at 10 or at 30 – even at 50 or 60. Fitness should not be seen as the cure for an illness you already have, but as preventative maintenance.

# **Assessing Your Fitness Level**

Brad King and Dr. Michael Schmidt in "Bio Age, Ten Steps to a Younger You" have devised a questionnaire for assessing physical damage to a body as a result of no exercise. We will borrow some of their guidelines:

Start with the question, "How do I look?" Do any of these answers apply to you?

➤ Am I overweight? Do I look like an apple or pear?

Do I have a spare tire?
Has my skin become excessively dry, almost paper-thin?

Next, ask: "How do I feel?"

> Do my joints hurt before or after any physical exertion?

Am I constantly worried and anxious?

Do I feel tired and sluggish most of the time?

Do I suffer from mood swings?

Last question, "How am I doing?"

Is walking and climbing stairs difficult?

➤ Do I have problems concentrating?

Is running impossible for me now? Am I unable to sit straight, preferring to slouch or stoop my shoulders?

You've completed your basic assessment. Note, however, that other exercise or fitness gurus will have their own parameters or indices for assessing your body's overall state.

# **Turning You into a Fitness Buff!**

After going through the assessment phase, you're probably experiencing a "rude awakening".

### **Slowly but Surely...**

In fact "slowly but surely" was probably what motivated Denise Austin to come up with her popular one-minute exercises.

She had two types of people in mind when she designed the one-

#### minute movements:

- Uninitiated
- People on the go

It's a quickie society we live in; we want everything quick, especially exercise.

# **Benefits of Exercise**

If you make exercise part of your day, Denise Austin believes you'll already experience some noticeable benefits.

### These include:

- ✓ Waking up in the morning feeling refreshed
- ✓ Walking with a gait
- ✓ Having energy left at the end of the day
- ✓ Feeling more optimistic about recreation
- ✓ Sleeping more soundly at night

## **More Benefits of Exercise**

The benefits above are general. Let's examine the more specific benefits of exercise on specific parts of the body, as described by Goldberg and Elliot:

### ✓ Exercise prevents heart disease

The average ratio of total cholesterol to HDL cholesterol (good cholesterol) is about 4.5. If this ratio doubles or reaches 7, you double your chances of developing coronary heart disease. You reduce that risk by as much as 50% if your ratio is 3 or lower.

The lowdown on cholesterol: not all cholesterol is bad. You have the good one (HDL-1 and HDL-2), the not so bad one (VLDL) and the harmful one (LDL).

To get your ratios, divide the total amount of your cholesterol by your amount of HDL. The lower the ratio you have, the better.

### ✓ Exercise prevents osteoporosis

28 MILLION AMERICANS HAVE OSTEOPOROSIS. 80% ARE WOMEN. ONLY  $\frac{1}{4}$  OF THIS 80% KNOW THEY HAVE THE CONDITION AND ONLY HALF ARE BEING TREATED. THE ANNUAL OSTEOPOROSIS BILL TO THE UNITED STATES IS \$14 BILLION.

STUDIES HAVE SHOWN THAT SUFFICIENT AMOUNTS OF CALCIUM AND REGULAR EXERCISE BUILD STRONG BONES.

WHILE GENETICS PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN DEVELOPING THE RISKS OF OSTEOPOROSIS, INDIVIDUALS CAN CONTROL SOME FACTORS THAT WILL HELP PREVENT THE

PROBLEM.

PEAK BONE MASS IS ATTAINED IN YOUR 20'S.

STARTING AN EXERCISE PROGRAM WHILE STILL YOUNG, EVEN IF YOU LIVE IN THE FAST LANE, WILL HELP YOU AVOID BONE DISEASE.

### ✓ Exercise prevents diabetes

People are still debating how much exercise an individual needs, but for people with type 2 diabetes, exercising three or more times a week improves fitness and blood sugar levels. If you have type 2 diabetes and are overweight, exercise done with the following parameters would be of tremendous benefit: intensity of 60%-70% maximal heart rate, with duration of 30 or more minutes, 4-7 days each week.

There have been hundreds of documented reports that reveal how people's lives have significantly improved and the remarkable transformation that their bodies experience after they made the decision to take ownership of their weight and fat problems.

In fact, Diane Rinehart (former Toronto magazine editor and writer) wrote in the Montreal Gazette on December 12, 2005:

"What we're hearing about...is waiting times in emergency and operating rooms for ailments such as hip replacements, heart surgery and amputations. That's a shame because the fact is, if we dealt with obesity, we wouldn't be facing the epidemics of heart disease, stroke, arthritis and diabetes that clog our hospital waiting rooms and OR's."

# SECTION 2: HOW TO INCLUDE EXERCISE

Feeling overwhelmed by the amount of time your friends and colleagues spend in the gym? Turned off by the idea of a tennis game that entails not only the hour-long match but also getting to the tennis club, changing into a tennis outfit and then showering afterwards?

YOU THINK, "THAT'S ALMOST 3 HOURS — THREE HOURS I COULD DEVOTE TO NURTURING MY CLIENTS AND EXPANDING MY SALES TERRITORY." THE BAD NEWS IS, BEING PENNY WISE AND POUND FOOLISH DOES NOT WORK IN ANY CIRCUMSTANCE, ESPECIALLY WHERE FITNESS AND HEALTH ARE CONCERNED.

ARE THOSE THREE HOURS WORTH SKIPPING DURING A GIVEN WEEK WHEN YOU KNOW THAT YEARS OF OPTIMUM HEALTH CAN BE YOURS IF YOU HAD A POSITIVE ATTITUDE ACCOMPANIED BY REASONABLE DOSES OF DISCIPLINE?

# A Simple Exercise Program

INSTEAD OF IGNORING EXERCISE ALTOGETHER, HERE'S A SUGGESTION FOR INTEGRATING IT INTO YOUR BUSY SCHEDULE. THINK OF EXERCISE LIKE YOU THINK OF A MAJOR TASK IN THE OFFICE. BREAK IT UP INTO TINIER COMPONENTS.

INSTEAD OF SPENDING TWO HOURS IN THE GYM OR IN THE TENNIS COURT LIKE YOUR FRIENDS DO, ASK YOUR TRAINER TO DIVIDE YOUR WORKOUT PROGRAM.

### **Suggestion A**

30 MINUTES FOUR TIMES A WEEK, I.E.: 20 MINUTES CARDIO, 10 MINUTES WEIGHTS (1 MUSCLE GROUP, E.G. LEGS)

### **SUGGESTION B**

30 MINUTES THREE TIMES A WEEK

Mon: 20 minutes cardio + 10 minutes stretching;

Tues: 20 minutes weights (2 muscle groups, e.g. back and abdominals)

+ 10 MINUTES OF CARDIO.

WED: 20 MINUTES CARDIO + 10 MINUTES OF

WEIGHTS (TWO MUSCLE GROUPS, E.G. TRICEPS OR CHEST, BICEPS OR SHOULDERS)

### **Suggestion C**

20 MINUTES 5 DAYS A WEEK.

WEEK 1: ALL CARDIO

WEEK 2: WEIGHTS

WEEK 3: CARDIO ON MON/WED/FRI

WEEK 4: WEIGHTS ON TUES/THURS

REPEAT THE ENTIRE CYCLE WHEN YOU GET TO MONTH 2.

# **Frequency and Intensity**

IDEALLY, YOU SHOULD GRADUALLY INCREASE THE FREQUENCY OR INTENSITY, OR BOTH. BUT IF YOU'RE BUSY, AND DEFINITELY CAN'T SPARE MORE THAN 30 MINUTES A DAY, THEN INCREASE YOUR INTENSITY. THIS MEANS IF YOUR CARDIO INVOLVES THE TREADMILL, TAKE THE NOTCH UP 1 LEVEL (IF YOU STARTED WITH LEVEL 3, GO ON TO LEVEL 4 ON MONTH 2).

FOR YOUR WEIGHT TRAINING, IF YOU STARTED WITH 5-POUND WEIGHTS, GRADUATE INTO 7.5 POUNDS IN MONTH 2. AND THEN ON THOSE DAYS WHEN YOUR DAY IS NOT FILLED WITH MEETINGS, TRY TO STAY AN EXTRA 5-10 MINUTES.

BE REALISTIC WITH YOUR GOALS, ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU'RE JUST STARTING.
INCREASING FREQUENCY AND INTENSITY TOO SOON CAN OVERWHELM YOU,
MAKING YOU WANT TO GIVE UP.

# Variety is the Spice of Life

Another way to integrate exercise into a busy schedule is to vary the fitness routine. Variety promotes interest in maintaining your workout schedule. Without variety, boredom sets in, causing you to drop out.

### Walk before you Run...

IF YOU'RE AN ABSOLUTE BEGINNER, A FULL BLOWN WORKOUT WHICH INCORPORATES CARDIO, WEIGHTS, AND FLEXIBILITY MAY SCARE OR DISCOURAGE YOU. THE IDEA IS TO START WITH SMALL STEPS.

DO ONE EXERCISE SEGMENT AT A TIME. BESIDES, VERY FEW PEOPLE CAN ACCOMPLISH A TWO-HOUR WORKOUT MORE THAN ONCE OR TWICE A WEEK.

ANOTHER WAY OF DOING IT WOULD BE TO INTEGRATE YOUR FAVORITE SPORT (SWIMMING, CYCLING OR WALKING) DURING THE WEEK AND AN ACTIVITY LIKE YOGA.

# **Time Management**

If your schedule gets you up and running beginning at 6 in the morning until 6 in the evening, this day represents 12 hours. There are 24 hours in a day and we're not recommending you get up at 2 in the morning to do your exercise.

BUT YOU COULD GET UP HALF AN HOUR EARLY AND USE THE EXTRA TIME FOR SOME TYPE OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY. IF YOU DO THIS THREE TIMES A WEEK, THAT MEANS YOU GET 90 MINUTES OF EXERCISE EACH WEEK.

ONE EASY WAY TO DO THIS IS TO DO YOGA IN THE MORNING (IT REQUIRES ONLY A MAT AND COMFORTABLE, LOOSE CLOTHING), OR TURN ON THE JANE FONDA CD/DVD, OR BUY A TREADMILL (THE FOLDABLE ONES) THAT YOU CAN JUMP INTO AS SOON AS YOU WAKE UP.

ANOTHER TIME MANAGEMENT TIP: NOT ONLY DO BUSY MANAGERS HAVE BACK-TO-BACK MEETINGS, THEY ALSO HAVE LUNCHEON AND DINNER MEETINGS TO MEET WITH CLIENTS. ASSESS EACH CLIENT. DO ALL OF THEM REALLY NEED TO BE WINED AND DINED? IS AN HOUR LONG MEETING ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY? CAN'T A DEAL BE NEGOTIATED ON THE PHONE?

SEE HOW MANY MEETINGS YOU CAN CANCEL OR SHORTEN. THEN FIT YOUR FITNESS PROGRAM INTO THOSE SLOTS THAT HAVE BEEN FREED UP. HOW ABOUT THIS: INSTEAD OF GOING TO LUNCH WITH CLIENTS EVERY DAY OF THE WEEK, WHY DON'T YOU SCHEDULE LUNCH MEETINGS FOR SAY MONDAY AND TUESDAY? THIS WAY YOU CAN INCORPORATE A FITNESS ROUTINE FOR WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY AND FRIDAY FROM 12:00 TO 1:00 PM.

A BRISK WALK INSIDE OR OUTSIDE THE OFFICE BUILDING, A QUICK SWIM IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD HOTEL POOL, A PILATES COURSE IN THE RECREATIONAL CENTRE, LIFTING DUMB BELLS WHILE ON THE PHONE? ANY OF THESE EXERCISES IS BETTER THAN NO EXERCISE. YOUR GUIDING PRINCIPLE SHOULD BE TO MOVE, MOVE AS FREQUENTLY AS YOU CAN MANAGE IT.

# **Cubicle Fitness**

JUST AS ERGONOMIC EXPERTS RECOMMEND THAT OFFICE WORKERS TAKE THEIR EYES OFF THEIR COMPUTER SCREEN EVERY HOUR OR SO, FITNESS EXPERTS ARE ADVOCATING GETTING UP FROM YOUR CHAIR AND TAKING A BRISK WALK UP AND DOWN THE STAIRS.

When you feel the need to take a break, offer to pick up supplies for your colleagues, take the mail downstairs instead of waiting for the trolley, or think of something you could put in your car instead of waiting until 5 pm. That way, you force yourself to get up from your seat and walk for a few minutes.

IF YOU LOOK INTO THE PRIVATE OFFICES OF SOME PEOPLE, YOU'LL SEE DUMB BELLS, MATS AND ELASTIC BANDS — THESE ARE CLUES THAT THEY ARE DOING SOME EXERCISE WHILE ON THE JOB — A GOOD AND HEALTHY PRACTICE TO ADOPT BY BUSY INDIVIDUALS WITH HECTIC SCHEDULES.

# **Family Exercises**

ON THE WEEKENDS WHEN YOU JOIN THE FAMILY IN THEIR ACTIVITIES, TRY TO INTEGRATE EXERCISE INTO THESE ACTIVITIES: IF THE CHILDREN ARE INTO CYCLING, JOIN THEM FOR BIKE RIDES. ARE THEY OFF TO THEIR SWIMMING LESSONS OR SKATING LESSONS? SEE IF YOU CAN SIGN UP IN THE ADULTS SECTION, OR TAKE A WALK OUTSIDE THE RECREATIONAL CENTER WHILE WAITING FOR THEM.

# **Chores Burn Calories**

WHO SAYS YOU CAN'T BURN CALORIES WHILE DOING HOUSEWORK OR GARDENING? TAKE A BREATHER FROM YOUR HECTIC SCHEDULE AND DEVOTE SOME DOWN TIME TO TENDING TO YOUR LAWN, TRIMMING YOUR ROSE BUSHES, SCRUBBING THE KITCHEN AND BATHROOM FLOORS, ETC.

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