**Tips for Getting Physically Fit**

By: University of California, Berkeley Wellness

Physical fitness -- the ability to carry out daily tasks with vigor, without undue fatigue and with ample energy to enjoy leisure-time pursuits -- has three basic elements. To be truly fit, you should develop each of these components.

***1) Cardiorespiratory endurance*** is reflected in the sustained ability of the heart and blood vessels to carry oxygen to your body's cells. Excellent "aerobic" activities for building endurance include brisk walking, running, in-line skating, swimming, cycling, rowing and aerobic dance.

*Recommendation:* To gain health benefits, 30 minutes of moderate physical activity over the course of most days is enough. For greater cardiovascular benefits, you need to perform moderate- to high-intensity aerobic exercise (at 60 to 90 percent of your maximum heart rate) three to five times a week, with each session lasting 20 to 60 minutes, in addition to warm-up and cool-down activities.

***2) Muscular fitness consists of strength*** -- the force a muscle produces in one effort -- and endurance -- the ability to perform repeated muscle contractions in quick succession.

*Recommendation:* Perform moderate-intensity resistance workouts twice a week lasting at least 15 minutes per session, not counting your warm-up and cool-down.

***3) Flexibility*** refers to the ability of the joints to move without discomfort through their full range of motion. This varies from person to person and from joint to joint. Good flexibility is thought to protect the muscles against pulls and tears, since short, tight muscles may be more likely to be overstretched.

*Recommendation:* Try to perform flexibility exercises three to four times a week.

*Note:* **Before you begin an exercise program:**

If you are over 40 and sedentary, the American College of Sports Medicine recommends that you consult your physician before beginning an exercise program and have a pre-exercise medical and physical examination. Your physician may recommend that you take a special exercise stress test.

If you are younger, consult with a physician first if you have any risk factors for heart disease (such as recurrent chest pain, high blood pressure or cholesterol levels, smoking or obesity). Also, contact your physician if you have cardiovascular or lung disease (or symptoms that might suggest this).

**Tips for Getting Physically Fit**

1. Circle and write down all unfamiliar words in the selection

2. Define those words using context clues in the reading.

3. Underline 5 key facts or main ideas from the reading; write them on your paper.

4. After studying their definitions of fitness, cardio-respiratory endurance, muscular fitness, and flexibility - how would you define them in your own words?

5. Of the three areas which **one** do you think is the most crucial? Tell why and Justify your answer

6. Explain the differences between the cardio-respiratory recommendations for “health benefits” and those for “greater cardiovascular benefits”. Compare and contrast - Clarify your statements

7. Compare and contrast the before you exercise recommendations for people over age 40 and those of a much younger age? Clarify your statements - Justify your answer.

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