

Fitness 101: Keeping It Simple

By Dr. Robert DeVincentis

Previously we talked about Nutrition 101: Keeping it Simple, now I would like to talk about another part of health and wellness, fitness and exercise. The first thing you have to do is make a commitment to get started. Bottom line is this: you simply have to make fitness and exercise a part of your life. If you want to feel better, look better, and live longer, you have to throw out all excuses and make fitness a part of your life. If you have children, make it a part of their life. If you have a spouse make it a part of his/ her life. Just like taking a bath or shower fitness has to be a part of your routine.

I don't think I need to tell you all why you need to exercise, you all know the many benefits from it. So once you make the commitment to exercise what do you do? First lets look at exercise at a whole. Exercise really is broken down into two parts, cardiovascular training and resistance training, both of which should be part of your fitness regimen. Cardiovascular training should consist of the following: anything that will keep your heart rate at your target heart rate for twenty minutes or longer for at least three days per week. To figure your target heart rate do the following: subtract your age from 220 and then multiply by 70% or .70. Whatever it takes to keep your heart rate at this level is sufficient.

The second part of fitness is resistance weight training. Year after year more and more research is proving numerous health benefits of resistance weight training for men and women. If it hasn't been a part of your fitness regimen, it needs to be. Resistance training simply is working all of your muscles through all of their ranges of motion at least twice a week. When considering a weight training program you can separate your workouts using different muscle groups. The following are the major muscle groups: back, chest, legs, shoulders and arms. Arms can further be broken down into biceps and triceps. Body parts can be broken up into two to three muscle groups per workout. Three sets per exercise or muscle is sufficient. A set is defined as one exercise done a certain amount of repetitions. Repetitions should consist of anywhere from 12-18.

We all don't have to become bodybuilders and lift massive amounts of weight and build huge muscles, but we all should exercise and contract all of our muscles through their full range of motion. By keeping the muscles with good tone we are also able to keep our bones strong. Weight training can help prevent the onset of osteoporosis, strengthen the immune system, strengthen the heart, prevent injuries, increase testosterone and estrogen, decrease stress and its damaging effects to the body, increase self-esteem, extend life, and increase your libido.

The next question you need to ask yourself is, ok where do I do all of this? You can buy a home gym for your house and do cardio outside or also at home. However, my experience with fitness consulting and even through personal experience has shown me that this rarely works and the equipment purchased for the home is rarely used and collects dust. Quite simply put, there are way too many distractions at home to try and workout for 45 minutes to an hour. You will find many other things to do at the house before you workout. However, if you get in you car and go to a fitness center you will have nothing to do there but workout. You will also have a much better selection and variety of equipment to use and a multiple choice of cardiovascular selections. You also don't have to worry about the costly repairs of the equipment. Being in a group where people are working out will also provide more motivation. And lastly, your in-laws won't have to sleep on the air mattress in the family room because your spare bedroom has turned into a poor excuse for a home gym.

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