

Walking- Get the Whole Family Involved

Walking is the least expensive and most easily accessible form of physical activity and summertime is a great time to be outside. Take that after-supper or early morning walk! December 2005 Nutrition Action Health Letter reports that activity can stimulate organs to function better even for folks in their 90's. It is never too late to start!!

10 ways activity improves the body's function:

1- Diabetes. Regular exercise reverses damage caused by insulin resistance and reduces risk of diabetes.

2- Cancer. Exercise boosts the immune system and reduces the risk of breast and colon cancers.

3- Brain. The more physical activity the lower the risk for dementias and cognitive decline.

4- Heart. Exercise boosts HDL (good) cholesterol and makes vessels more elastic reducing heart disease.

5- Stroke. Exercise lowers blood pressure and reduces risk of blood clots.

6- Muscles. Every decade after age 50 we loose 6% of muscle mass or 10-15% of strength.

7- Bones. Strength training preserves bone better than walking. Load is more important than repetitions.

8- Mental Health. Active people are less likely to develop depression.

9- Weight. Each hour a day of brisk walking cuts the obesity rate by 24%. Risk of obesity is 68% higher in women who watch 20-40 hrs of TV per week.

10- Immune System. Regular exercise can decrease inflammation and reduces risk of upper resp. infections.

BOTTOM LINE-

Do 30 minutes/day moderate-intensity aerobic exercise.
Keep weight off with 60-90 minutes a day.
Strength training 2 times per week

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