Exercise Guidelines

Incorporating Movement

Newton's First Law states that objects in motion stay in motion, while objects at rest will stay at rest unless acted upon by an outside force. While intuitively we know this to be true, we often believe that our own movement or exercise plan will change at some point 'down the road' despite lack of follow through.

Many of us vow to exercise more next week, next year, or as soon as our schedule settles down. And yet we find ourselves, a year later, still vowing to make changes at some point in the future.

The Benefits of Exercise

We all know that exercise is beneficial for the health of our hearts, to increase muscle strength, and to manage our weight. But exercise is also very important for regulating inflammation in our bodies, by decreasing chemical messengers that contribute to inflammation, as well as for increasing a substance known as Brain-derived neurotrophic factor that stimulates the growth of brain cells and connections between them.

Without exercise, you are more likely to experience early memory loss and mood troubles. Strength training in particular, can help to prevent bone loss and improve balance, decreasing your risk of osteoporosis related fractures. The list of benefits goes on and on, and yet, exercise often falls to the bottom of our to-do lists.

Failing to Plan is Planning to Fail

Creating goals is a helpful technique for ensuring you stay on track with your exercise ambitions. However, goals need to follow a few basic parameters to be successful. Whenever you are setting a goal, make sure it is SMART:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant to Your Motivation
- Time Based

What does this look like when considering exercise? An example would be: "Beginning in January and for the next 3 months, my goal is to go for three, 30-minute bike rides per week in order to improve my cardiovascular health and to help with my goal of losing 10 pounds".

It has a specific start date, a measurable amount (3x30mins every week), it is attainable, relevant to my overarching goals (weight loss), and time bound (3 months).

Where Do I Begin?

Current Canadian physical activity guidelines recommend at least 150 minutes per week of moderate to vigorous cardiovascular exercise (for ages 18-64yrs).

Moderate to vigorous refers to exercise that causes you to break a sweat and does not include basic movements of daily living such as taking the stairs or walking around the office. While these general movements are helpful, they are not considered cardiovascular exercise. It is recommended to also include strength training at least two times per week

Notes