

Monthly Wellness Update

*Courtesy of
Advanced Rehabilitation Clinics, Inc
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Starting An Exercise Program

The start of a new year is the time many people pledge to begin exercising. During January, the health clubs are typically very crowded with people exercising. By February, the crowds have thinned a little and by March the only people exercising are the ones who were exercising the previous March. I applaud the effort because exercise plays a crucial role in lowering the risk of death, even among those with an elevated risk such as previous heart attack or emphysema. The Surgeon General recommends people get 30 minutes of physical activity every day. There are several things that you can do that will help you start exercising and keep you exercising safely. First, see your doctor if you haven't been active in a long time or haven't had a recent check up. This will allow your doctor to identify any concerns he or she has before you start exercising. Second, identifying your goal and preferences. Your goals can help you decide how challenging of a workout you want to perform. If you choose an activity you like, such as biking, swimming, or walking, you will be more likely to continue with it. One way of reaching the recommended level of 30 minutes of exercise is by performing mini-workouts. These can be anything from parking your car farther from the door or getting off the bus a couple of blocks early and walking the rest of the way. Did you know there are almost 15 minutes of commercials every hour on TV? What if you exercised only during commercials? In 2 hours of watching TV, you would accumulate the recommended 30 minutes of physical activity, and not miss your favorite show!

Stretch after workouts to help prevent muscle soreness and improve flexibility. When stretching, hold a gentle stretch for at least 30 seconds. You can never stretch too much but you can stretch too hard. Try to feel only gentle stretches. Drink plenty of fluids, at least 2 cups before and after exercising, even if you're not thirsty. Our thirst is a safety mechanism. So if you feel thirsty you are already dehydrated! On hot humid days, drink 8 ounces for every 15 minutes of exercise. It is good to challenge yourself, but slowly. If you are walking, work up to 20-30 minutes at a comfortable pace and a brisk pace by walking 2 minutes at the slower pace then 2 minutes at the faster pace. If you work your way up to 30 minutes of brisk walking, you might want to try working in some running. Start with 30 seconds of running, followed by 90 seconds of brisk walking for 30 minutes. Progress to 45 seconds of running and 75 seconds of walking then 75 seconds of running and 45 seconds of walking, then 90 seconds of running and 30 seconds of walking. Finally you'll be running for 30

minutes. This can take anywhere from 8 weeks to 4 months to progress through. Be careful to listen to your body and go slowly.

To burn more calories, consider adding weight training to your aerobic exercise program. Start by doing 15-20 minutes 2-3 days per week. You can perform 1 set of 15-20 repetitions for each major muscle group, which is a total of 8-10 exercises.

If you have any more questions or concerns please feel free to stop by Advanced Rehabilitation Clinics, Inc. (located within the Lifestart Wellness Center or call the main office at 630-832-6919.)

