



Body Awareness Physical Therapy

The Body Beat

Winter 2005

Volume Four

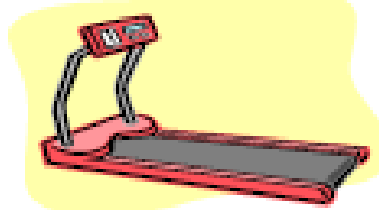
Number Three

Exercise and Aging

Age does not impair the ability to adapt to exercise, despite what you may think. Everyone can benefit from exercise, regardless of age. Unfortunately, inadequate physical activity causes nearly 30% of all deaths from heart disease, colon cancer, and diabetes.

Exercising regularly (see "Healthy Hints" for components recommended in an exercise program) offers endless benefits both physically and mentally, such as:

Older individuals are capable of making significant gains in strength of the same relative magnitude as their younger counterparts. Increases of 2 to 3-fold in muscle strength can be accomplished in a relatively short period of time (3-4 months). These strength increases help decrease the risk for falls and fractures, increase



the ability to stay warm, increase efficiency in regulating blood sugar, and decrease the overall loss in the ability to perform everyday tasks.

Exercise can also help reduce the percentage of fat in the body. This reduction in the percentage of fat has been shown to decrease the risk for diseases, such as heart disease, as well as decreases the chance of premature death.

Other benefits of exercise are reductions of blood insulin levels, arterial blood pressures, and lipid (fat) and lipoprotein levels. This helps decrease the risk for heart disease, strokes, and diabetes.

For those that have been

diagnosed with osteopenia or osteoporosis, exercise can help with that as well. Strength training has been shown to improve bone density and reduces the decline in bone mass.

Flexibility and range of motion exercises are a beneficial part of a total exercise program because they help decrease the risk for muscle pain and increase mobility, function, and balance.

As a physical therapist, there is one final reason that is important to either begin or continue to exercise: Exercise can increase functional capacity and therefore decrease loss of independence, decrease incidence of disability, and help maintain quality of life.

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Q'N'A

Your questions answered by the Licensed Physical Therapists of Body Awareness Physical Therapy.

Q: I am 70 years old and have had knee pain for many years. Should I talk to my doctor about a knee replacement? When do you know if you need one?

A: It would be beneficial to talk to either your primary care physician or your orthopedic surgeon regarding a total knee replacement. Here are several signs that would indicate the need for joint replacement:

- Inability to sleep at night due to pain.
- Medication does not help to ease the pain.
- Your pain is limiting your quality of life.
- You have trouble getting out of a chair, getting off the toilet, getting up off the floor, or going up the stairs due to pain.
- Conservative attempts of physical therapy have failed.

Conservative treatment is often recommended prior to surgical intervention.

Q: I want to get started on a walking program, what should I think about before I begin?

A: Here are four things to think about when getting started on a walking program:

- **Pace yourself:** Maintain a pace that enables you to hold a conversation. Start slow and easy, gradually building up to your pace and distance.
- **Shoes:** Initially, you may want to go to a professional shoe store where trained staff can fit you for a shoe for your foot type and need.
- **Proper gait:** Everyone has their "style of walking" that determines the distribution of stress to various parts of your body. If you feel discomfort or pain when walking, consult your doctor or physical therapist.
- **Hydrate:** Drink water before, during, and after your walk. Sipping 8-12 oz. of water every 30 minutes is recommended.

BODY AWARENESS GRADUATE OF THE MONTH

Graduate of the Month: Betsy McGee

Betsy began therapy 4 months ago with limited use of her arm due to tendonitis. She was unable to close her car door, style her hair, reach up into cupboards, and perform other everyday functions. Since her discharge, Betsy is able to

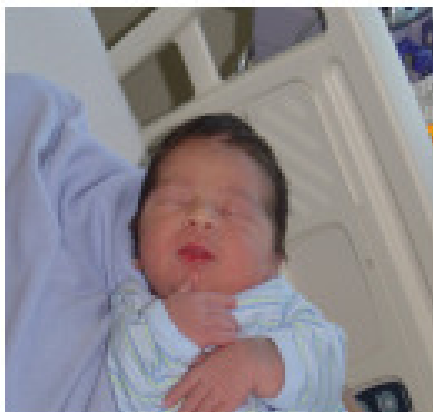


perform these functions with "little or no discomfort." Betsy's therapist attributes her success to Betsy's dedication to her home exercise program and visits to therapy. As Betsy put it, "It was a long road...but it was totally worth the time and hard work."

Community Corner

Useful websites for information about exercise, nutrition, various diseases and conditions, as well as other topics related to aging:

- www.agingblueprint.org: The National Blueprint: Increasing Physical Activity Among Adults Age 50 and Older
- www.fitness.gov: The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports
- www.nia.nih.gov/HealthInformation: National Institute on Aging



Nathan Jack Sulkess:

Nate was born on November 25, 2005. He weighted 7 pounds-1 ounce, 19.5 inches long. He came two weeks early to proud parents Chrissie and Glenn.

Win a pair of movie passes!

The first five people who call in and give us the correct number of times the word "exercise" is used in this newsletter will win a pair of movie passes. Call now!

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Healthy Hints

Recommended components of an exercise program, particularly for older adults:

- Incorporate moderate endurance activities (like walking, biking, or using an elliptical machine) for a goal of 30 minutes, at least 4 days/week.
- Include a 10-15 minute warm-up and cool down with each workout.
- Perform strengthening activities with weights, resistance tubing, coil resistance, or some other form of resistance at least 2 days per week.
- Incorporate balance activities into daily activities. One suggested balance activity is to stand on one leg for 30 seconds making sure that your pelvis stays level and that you do not rotate anywhere in your body.
- Remember, safety is a key component to any exercise program. It is a good idea to consult your doctor before starting any exercise regimen.