

HEALTH & WELLNESS RESOURCE PACKET

AUGUST 2010

ACTIVITY QUIZ

Ready to start exercising, but don't know where to start? This quiz from the AARP can get you off on the right foot. Circle True or False at the end of each statement.

1. To get the best workout possible, you need to visit a gym. **True False**
2. For the best home workout, follow an exercise video -- even if you can't stand working out in front of the TV. **True False**
3. It's important to include some kind of aerobic activity in your exercise routine. **True False**
4. Stretching exercises can help prevent falls. **True False**
5. Always talk to your doctor before beginning a new exercise program. **True False**
6. Remember, "no pain, no gain." **True False**

The Answers

1. **False.** Physical activity is not limited to calisthenics or aerobics. You can get enough exercise through daily activities. Count walking the dog, working in the garden or cleaning up the house as your daily exercise.
2. **False.** If you hate exercise videos, don't do them! Experts recommend picking an activity that you enjoy so you'll stick with it. If walking briskly around the block is more appealing, then do that. If working in the garden is your passion, then do that.
3. **True.** Activities such as walking, swimming and dancing increase your heart rate and breathing, making your heart, lungs and circulatory system healthier. Aerobic exercise may also delay or prevent such diseases as diabetes, colon cancer, and heart disease.
4. **True.** Stretching exercises help improve your flexibility and keep your body limber. Experts say these exercises also may help slow the development of arthritis. Balancing exercises, such as briefly standing on one leg, also help prevent falls.
5. **True.** Your doctor may want to give you a physical examination to assess your health. He or she may also be able to suggest exercises that are best for you.
6. **False!** Experts say you don't need to do strenuous exercises to gain health benefits. Moderate exercise is just fine. In fact, because you're not overdoing it, you'll be more likely to stick with a moderate program than one that pushes you too hard. The key is listening to your body. Rest when necessary, and always drink water -- before, during and after exercise.

20 EASY WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR DIET

Healthy eating can reduce your risk of illness and lengthen your life. Eating a balanced, low-fat, low-cholesterol diet reduces your risk of heart disease, certain cancers, diabetes, stroke and other diseases. Follow these tips to help improve your diet.

1. Have seconds on vegetables. Doing so will help ensure you consume the recommended three- to five-serving daily minimum. Reminder: A typical vegetable serving size is 1/2 cup.
2. Eat a whole-grain cereal for breakfast.
3. Top your cereal with fresh fruit. You'll add fiber and, depending on the fruit, a healthful dose of vitamins A, B and C.
4. Order healthy choices when you eat out. Request that foods such as fish and chicken be baked instead of fried.
5. Keep salads healthy by going easy on regular dressing or using low-fat or nonfat dressing.
6. Eat fish for dinner at least once a week. The omega-3 fatty acids in fish can reduce your risk of heart attack.
7. Choose whole fruit over fruit juice. You'll consume less sugar and more fiber.
8. Educate yourself about nutrition. This will make it easier to eat a well-balanced diet.
9. Drink a full glass of water before a meal and another one with it. You'll stay hydrated and be less likely to overeat.
10. Add lentils, beans, kasha, brown rice and peas to your diet for an added fiber boost.
11. Buy low-fat or fat-free ham, salami and other cold cuts.
12. Choose low-fat alternatives when a food craving hits. Go for a low-fat candy bar instead of a regular one, or baked chips instead of regular ones.
13. Don't peel apples, pears, peaches and potatoes. Many of their nutrients and a lot of their fiber is contained in, or just under, their skins.
14. Buy "healthy," low-salt versions of soups, pasta sauces and lunch meats if you're watching your sodium intake.
15. Drink iced tea instead of soda. Tea contains antioxidants and can help protect against heart disease and cancer.
16. A 12-ounce can of regular soda contains 10 teaspoons of sugar; diet sodas are sugar-free but contain no nutrients and lots of chemicals.
17. Read food labels of comparable brands of salad dressings, frozen foods, packaged dinners, cookies, and crackers. Choose those with the least fat, cholesterol and sodium.
18. Switch from whole milk to 1 percent or skim milk.
19. Take fresh or dried fruit to work for a mid-morning or mid-afternoon snack.
20. Eat reasonable portions of food. Even healthy foods can cause weight gain if you eat too much of them.

Source: *Wellness Library Health Ink and Vitality Communications* ©2010

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FINDING YOUR HIDDEN EXERCISE OPPORTUNITIES

If you exercise for fitness, good for you. But if you spend the rest of your time behind a desk or lounging in an easy chair, you're missing some important benefits of physical activity.

"Your body -- and you -- function best in an active state," says George J. Pfeiffer, president of the Workcare Group in Charlottesville, VA. "The more often you get up and get moving, the better you will feel and the more productive you will be."

Even a few minutes of extra activity, such as walking around the block at lunchtime, will help you feel more alert, reduce your stress and increase your energy. "You will also burn calories -- maybe just a few at a time, but they all add up," Mr. Pfeiffer says. Keeping active also helps you stick with your regular fitness program because exercise becomes part of your lifestyle.

Exercise Your Attitude

To make exercise a natural part of your life, Mr. Pfeiffer suggests you look for opportunities to keep moving throughout the day, not just during scheduled workouts. Ask yourself, "How can I walk a few more steps?" not, "Where's the nearest chair?"

You can spot exercise opportunities almost everywhere when you look for them. These ideas will get you started.

On Your Way to Work

- Get off the bus a stop or two early and walk the rest of the way.
- When driving, stop every couple of hours to stretch your legs, back and upper body.
- Stretch your shoulders and neck at red lights.
- Park your car in the farthest space available. A bonus: You save the time you would spend looking for a closer spot.
- If it's not too far and there's a safe route, ride a bicycle or walk to work a couple of days a week.
- Do a few quick stretches before entering your office building. Then straighten your shoulders, hold your head high and walk briskly to your workstation.

At Work

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Take the long route to the cafeteria, water fountain and restrooms, walking briskly.
- Get up and move around if you're stuck on a problem or need an idea. Take a walk, go copy a document or tidy up your office.
- Keep a soft rubber ball in your desk to flex your hands while you're seated.
- Stretch while standing in line at the cafeteria or copy machine.

At Home and Play

- Take a walk before or after dinner.
- Buy a jump rope and keep it where you can easily use it.
- Use an exercise bike or stair climber while watching television.
- Play active games outside with your children.
- Spread out chores that require physical activity -- such as vacuuming or grocery shopping -- throughout the week so you're doing something every day.

12 WAYS TO HAVE A HEALTHY YEAR

Making healthy choices in your life can influence your general health and longevity more than genetics and the environment. Adopting these lifestyle choices can help you stay healthy, energized -- and out of the doctor's office.

1. Get regular health screenings. Many fatal illnesses, including breast cancer, prostate cancer, skin cancer, heart disease and diabetes, can be detected by regular health screenings and treated successfully if diagnosed early.

2. Don't smoke. Cigarette smoking triples your risk of lung cancer and is the leading cause of heart disease.

3. Wear your seat belt. People who wear lap belts and shoulder belts reduce their risk of death in automobile accidents.

4. Drink alcohol moderately, if at all. More than one drink a day for women, or two drinks a day for men, increases your risk of liver disease, heart failure and some cancers.

5. Exercise regularly. Physical activity can control weight and stress and reduce your risk of heart attack, diabetes, stroke and some cancers.

6. When spending time outdoors, avoid the times of day when sun is most intense, wear protective clothing, and wear a sunscreen that has an SPF of at least 15 and protects against both the A and B wavelengths of UV (UVA and UVB) year-round.

7. Eat a well-balanced, low-fat, diet that includes plenty of fruits and vegetables. A healthful diet helps protect against cancer, stroke, heart disease, diabetes and other chronic diseases.

8. Manage your stress and other emotions. Excessive stress impairs your immune system and contributes to heart disease and many health problems. Seek professional help if you suffer depression or persistent anxiety. Call Claremont EAP at 800-834-3773 to discuss your counseling benefit with our intake counselors.

9. Keep your immunizations up to date and get preventive health exams recommended for your age and gender. Ask your health care provider if you should schedule any exams or immunizations in the year ahead.

10. See a doctor if you have unusual symptoms. Ones to watch for include a mass or lump anywhere on your body, chest pains, ongoing fatigue, chronic cough, heart palpitations and numbness or tingling in your hands or feet.

11. Maintain an ideal body weight. Keeping your weight within a healthful range can help prevent high blood pressure, stroke, heart disease and some cancers.

12. Learn about your family's medical history. Discuss your findings with your doctor if cancer, heart disease, diabetes or other serious conditions run in your family.