

The Importance of Being Active!

(brief version)

Caution!: *Do not engage in any changes of your physical activity if you have, or may have, any conditions that could put you at risk for complications. Always check with your healthcare provider if you do have, or are unsure that you have, something that can put you at further risk before changing your activity..*

For a moment, think about some of the wonderful aspects of regular, daily, safe, appropriate activity:

- ♦ It gives us time with friends and loved ones.
- ♦ It relieves pain.
- ♦ It takes us away from the usual daily stresses and offers a time for problem solving, meditation and prayer.
- ♦ It burns calories.
- ♦ It helps to lower our blood pressure.
- ♦ It improves our lung function making it easier to breathe when we exert ourselves.
- ♦ It lowers the the fats in our blood.
- ♦ It improves the effectiveness of our insulin.
- ♦ It strengthens our bones.
- ♦ It improves function for people with arthritis..
- ♦ It improves sleep.
- ♦ It reduces the risk of falling.
- ♦ It reduces the rates of depression.
- ♦ It helps with short term memory.
- ♦ It decreases fatigue.
- ♦ It decreases the risk of death (mortality) and chronic disease in general (morbidity).

Some general principles to consider while becoming more active include:

- ✓ Make it **fun, easy to perform and inexpensive** or it likely will not last.
- ✓ Chose a good time of day and try to be consistent. Wear comfortable clothing and avoid becoming chilled or overheated. Be sure the area is well lighted and safe.
- ✓ Start low and go slow. If you must stop your activity routine for a few weeks or longer, start the process over and slowly build up your endurance again.
- ✓ Consider mixing your routines such as walking, swimming or biking most of the days and doing strength training two days per week using small weights or bands.
- ✓ Stop if you feel pain or any other unexplained symptoms.
- ✓ Call 911 if you experience chest pressure, trouble breathing or get very short of breath, light headed or dizzy, nauseated or other serious unexplained symptoms.
- ✓ If you can check you heart rate (using a finger monitor), walk or exercise at a pace to increase your heart rate to 60% of your “Maximum Heart Rate” (MHR). This is calculated using the formula: $220 - (\text{your age}) = \text{maximum heart rate}$. Multiply this by .6 for 60% and .85 for 85% of this number.
- ✓ Week by week or month by month, slowly work your way up to 85% of your MHR if possible.

Some specific ideas to become more active:

- Walking is a great way to start (outside, in the mall or on a treadmill). Start with 10 minutes daily and add 5 minutes each week to a maximum of 30-60 minutes daily.
- A stationary bike is also a great way to exercise especially if you listen to music or watch a program during your activity. Also, start low and go slow as mentioned above.
- Always be able to carry on a conversation during activities (“talk test”). Stop immediately and call 911 if you develop any chest pain, breathing trouble, lightheadedness or other unexplained symptoms.
- Strengthening exercises can include placing your hands on your hips while seated and then stand up from the chair (chair squats); holding small weights in your hands (like a can of soup) while raising your arms to your sides, to the front and shrugging your shoulders. Then bend your arms at the elbows and lower them back down. “Wall push ups” involve facing the wall, placing your hands flat against the wall, lowering your body against the wall then pushing your body away from the wall returning to a near standing position.

What does God’s Word have to say about the importance of our health (taken from the NIV84)?

- † Physical training is of some value but godliness is of value for all things for this present life and the life to come (1 Timothy 4:8).
- † We are temples of the living God (1 Corinthians 3:16).
- † Our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit and we are not our own. We were bought with a price and are to glorify God in our body. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).