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Exercise ensures better quality of life

- By Karen Nichol (UK Health & Wellness Intern)



Take a moment to consider the basic benefits of exercise: improved heart and lung function; protection of bone integrity; reduction of risks for many diseases; and an overall slowing of the aging process. Remember, in order to achieve these benefits, it is recommended that you engage in moderately intense aerobic activity for at least 30 minutes five days a week and perform muscle strengthening activities at least two days a week. Based on those facts, it may seem unbelievable that such a small commitment can have such a profound effect on your health – but it's entirely true!

Many changes occur naturally in our bodies from the age of 30 to about 70. For instance, metabolic rate, muscle and bone mass, and flexibility decline while blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and body fat percentage increase. The best way to slow, or in some cases reverse this deterioration, is to engage in a consistent exercise program that directly opposes the negative changes. The more advanced the stage of regression your body is in, the more you need to focus on problematic areas to maintain a healthy status.

As we age, there are four main areas we must pay special attention to for

specific reasons:

1. **Cardiovascular endurance** strengthens your heart, lungs, and circulatory system. A healthy, resilient cardiovascular system is better equipped to fight off disease as well maintain a healthy blood pressure.
2. **Muscular strength** actively fights regression in two critical areas: bone mass and metabolic rate. Bone mass retention aides in the prevention of osteoporosis (especially important for postmenopausal women). Increased muscle strength also increases metabolic rate, which can help reduce body fat percentage and prevent the “creeping” weight gain that often appears in older adults.
3. **Balance** protects against falls and injury by increasing your coordination. Though it is often ignored, balance is considered one of the more evident difficulties aging adults face. Increasing balance allows for your body to correctively react to unexpected occurrences, such as slippery sidewalks, that put your body in an unstable, vulnerable state.
4. **Flexibility** helps sustain the range-of-motion of joints, which generally decreases with age. A lack in flexibility can negatively impact your ability to perform daily activities. Keep in mind that flexibility training should complement your strength training. One without the other could cause damage.

Proportion your time evenly, but be sure you're devoting adequate time to those areas where you are most vulnerable. No matter when you start, improving your physical fitness level in the present will improve your overall vitality in the future. If you need help creating or tailoring your exercise program, feel free to ask the Body Shop staff for assistance. Group fitness classes are available as well. We offer a variety of classes that can assist you in reaching your goals. Remember: you are not just working toward a longer life, but also toward increasing your quality of life!



Calendar

Take Action: Lunch & Learn Series

Attend our three FREE Take Action: Lunch & Learn Sessions this winter and spring. The next session, "Take Action: The Exercise Prescription" is Feb. 11, from 12:10-12:50 p.m., 405 Wethington. Register at www.uky.edu/HR/wellness/lunchandlearn.html.

Need help meeting your weight loss goals?

Now is the perfect time to make good health a priority by joining the Weight Loss Matters program. New classes begin Tuesday, Feb. 17, or Thursday, Feb. 19. The registration deadline is Feb. 13, and class size is limited. For more information or to register online, visit www.uky.edu/HR/wellness/weightlossmatters.html.

Chair massage

Having one of those days? You deserve a chair massage! The cost is only \$5 for 10 minutes or \$10 for 20 minutes. The next chair massage is Feb. 19, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., in Scovell Hall, Room 220, Suite 2. Reservations are required. For more information, call 257-9355.



Dancing with the Hep Cats! 6-Week Specialty Class

In this 6-week specialty class, you'll learn the salsa, waltz, and swing. You don't have to be a Body Shop member, and you don't have to bring a partner. You will be paired with someone each evening if needed. Classes begin March 17 and run every Tuesday through April 21, from 5:30-6:30 p.m., at 132 Seaton. Cost is just \$35. Class size is limited. Register at www.uky.edu/HR/wellness/bodyshop.html

Only University of Kentucky employees, retirees, spouses, and sponsored dependents are eligible for UK Health & Wellness services and programs.



Meet February's Membership Specialist

New to the Body Shop? Have questions? Matt is a Graduate Assistant for Health & Wellness who is here to help you. Feel free to ask him questions, offer suggestions, or set up a time to get oriented to the Body Shop facilities. You can find him in both facilities or you can reach him at healthandwellness@email.uky.edu. You can also read his -- and other staff profiles -- at www.uky.edu/HR/wellness/profiles.html.

Matt Cook, PFT