

Everyone can benefit from getting physical – whatever your age, size or physical condition. Just remember that you are never too old or too unfit to start doing something.

The good news is that inactive people that start to do moderate physical activity feel the biggest health benefits. Your health risks will decrease as soon as you start to do more!

Always warm up -

Warming up gets your system ready for exercise to follow. It should be lower intensity and lower impact.

Always cool down -

The main purpose of a cool-down period following exercise is to allow the heart rate to return gradually to its normal resting pace; to flush out all waste products (such as lactic acid) and to encourage blood flow from the extremities

back to the heart in order to prevent dizziness, fainting and soreness.

Be active all day long -

While regular, vigorous aerobic exercise is an excellent way to gain cardiovascular and health benefits, it is possible to gain health benefits through 'active living' – that is, incorporating moderate physical activity into everyday life. The activities that fall under this umbrella include walking, cycling and gardening.

Follow the four principles of exercise -

Any exercise programme for improving fitness should take into consideration four basic factors:

1. The type of exercise you do.
2. How many times per week you exercise.
3. How long you exercise for each session.
4. What intensity you work at.

The key is to fit your current fitness level and goals to these key principles. To improve fitness you should always try to do more than the session before - this is called overload.

Four things to consider when starting:

1. Do NOT exercise if you:

- Have an unstable medical condition - you should get your doctor's OK first.
- Have an injury/illness that affects your ability to exercise -listen to your body and your doctor.
- Have cardiac, pulmonary, or metabolic disease - seek your doctor's advice.

2. Start slowly in moderation Simply walk a little further than you normally do and progress to walking further and faster as the weeks and months pass. If you want to condition your muscles - lift a weight that you are used to lifting but do it more times than you normally do and gradually progress to lifting the weight 15 times.

3. Listen to your body You should always be able to catch your breath and speak comfortably while exercising and, although you should feel some discomfort, you should never feel pain. Rest adequately in between sessions.

4. Learn from a professional It is always useful to learn from someone who is a specialist. They can teach you which exercises to do and how intensely to do them.

