

# EXERCISE FOR HEALTH



**Get Fit, Get Healthy, Keep Living!**

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## Disclaimer

***We hope you enjoy reading this publication, however, we do suggest you read our disclaimer.***

All the material written in this document is provided for informational purposes only and is general in nature.

Every person is a unique individual and what has worked for some, or even many, may not work for you. Any information perceived as advice must be considered in light of your own particular set of circumstances.

The author or person sharing this information does not assume any responsibility for the accuracy or outcome of your use of the content.

Every attempt has been made to provide well-researched and up-to-date content at the time of writing. Now all the legalities have been taken care of, please enjoy the content.

## Introduction

‘Exercise’ is one of those terms that have vastly different meanings for different people. What does it mean to you?

If you are reading this eBook, it is most likely because you are aware that you probably aren’t doing enough exercise. But then again, what is enough?

Have you always been mostly sedentary? Except when forced into doing sport at school, have you avoided much regular physical exertion?

Or perhaps were you physically active in your younger years through work or sport, but have been a desk jockey for the last decade or two?

Most telling, when you are called upon to exert yourself, can you do it without becoming breathless and is your heart pounding? Do you feel your muscles aching for days after you do things that you used to do without even thinking about it?

In the back of your mind, you know that you should be doing more, but you probably don’t fully recognize just how much of your health, longevity, and joy of living is affected by how much or how little you exercise.

This eBook will explain the benefits of exercising, not just for physical fitness, but for strength, mobility, flexibility, and suppleness, and for mental and emotional wellbeing.

This eBook is not filled with bland generalizations. It is a guide that explains what exercises and types of exercises are best for specific requirements, whether that be aerobic fitness, strength gains, increased flexibility, and mobility, or improved overall health and wellbeing.

## Get Fit, Get Healthy



Living a healthy lifestyle is not easy, that's for sure. Busy schedules and take-out dinners equal disaster for our health and wellness. Our unhealthy habits can put us at a higher risk of heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and mental health issues.

You don't need to wait or make excuses as to why you can't when it comes to starting to get fit and healthy. You can start at any time of the year and today is the best time to begin your journey towards a healthier you.

## **Start Eating a Healthy Diet**

To get fit and healthy, it all starts with the right mindset, a healthy diet, and exercise.

## **Have Realistic Expectations**

Having lofty expectations about going on a diet might just set you up for failure. It is important to keep your goals and expectations realistic, especially at the beginning of your health journey. Setting realistic goals increases your chance of sticking to them in the long run.

## **Track Your Food Intake**

Tracking your food intake is a big help in going on a healthy diet. We tend to overeat when we are not able to monitor and review our food intake. By tracking what we eat, we can analyze our eating habits and be able to make changes to our diet.

There are several food tracking apps that you can use to help you track your food consumption. Food tracking apps also allow you to track your calorie intake and your carb intake, which is a helpful way to lose weight. But a pen and a handy notebook can work just as well, too.

## **Shop Smart**

Don't fall into the temptation of eating unhealthy foods by shopping in the wrong grocery aisles. Avoid buying junk foods and processed snacks, as well as canned meats that contain preservatives and unhealthy trans fat.

If you live with people who eat food that is not conducive to good health, try to keep the tempting food in places you don't get to see much. Out of sight, out of mind.

Another shopping tip is to never shop when hungry. Studies show that we tend to overshop for food when we are hungry, and there is a higher tendency to shop for junk foods.

## **Start Exercising Regularly**

### ***Choose An Exercise That Works For You***

Running, cycling, weights, HIIT, yoga, or Zumba? The choices may overwhelm you. But the good thing about it is that there is a workout that can work for you. Do you like building friendships and feeding off others' energy?

Then a group class would work for you. If you like spending some time by yourself to clear your mind, running might do the trick. Don't be afraid to dip your toes in different fitness routines to see what you like.

### ***Make a Time To Exercise and Stick to Your Schedule***

A lot of us find it difficult to make time for working out. One way to help you stick to it better is to set it as an appointment. You wouldn't just cancel a work meeting, right? Apply the same mentality when it comes to exercising. Pencil it in your daily schedule and try to work out at the same time slot to help you build the habit.

### ***Start Small and Exercise To Your Ability***

Setting realistic expectations for yourself will increase your chances of sticking to the workout in the long run. There is no need to exercise like a pro-athlete on your first attempt. The key to exercising regularly is to slowly build up your routine.

If you don't have an hour every day to work out, you can start with as little as 10 minutes a day, and build your way up. You can also try exercising twice a week and slowly increase it to three, four, or five times.

We all know that having a healthy lifestyle will greatly benefit our well-being. It takes discipline, determination, and motivation to change our unhealthy habits.

Though it may be challenging at times, we can be sure that we will eventually reap the rewards of having a healthy and fit body.

## Exercising for Health and Fitness



Don't let age be an excuse  
for not exercising.

If you have decided to start exercising, then congratulations on taking this big step towards becoming healthy! Exercising is one of the essential ways we can achieve optimum health.

It lowers our risk for chronic illnesses like diabetes and heart disease, and it can also help improve our brain function and boost our mood. Regular exercise can also alleviate the symptoms of arthritis.

Exercising for health and fitness can quite often appear daunting, as there are so many different types of workouts, machines, gyms, etc.

Seniors especially worry their current physical limitations may make them unfit for certain exercises. It's time to put many of the concerns aside as anyone can become fit at any age. Here are some tips and different exercises to get you started on your fitness journey.

### **Before Exercising**

For those who are new to exercising, it is recommended to get a clearance from your doctor first. If you have lived a sedentary existence until now it is essential to not overdo things in the beginning.

Your doctor will be able to evaluate your current fitness level and any health problems you need to address. People with pre-existing health conditions are also advised to see their doctor and obtain clearance before exercising.

### **Different Types of Exercises**

Doctors recommend that an exercise session should always start with a series of light stretching as a warm-up for a few minutes. Once your muscles are warmed up, you can now begin your workout.

There are three types of exercises that help you achieve overall physical wellness. There is no need to do these exercises all at once, but doing them all regularly can help you achieve more balanced fitness.

#### ***Cardiovascular Exercises***

These are exercises that increase your heart rate, such as walking, running, dancing, cycling, or moves like skipping and jumping.

#### ***Strength Conditioning***

These are moves that target specific muscle groups, like the upper or lower body. Weights and resistance bands are used to build strength and tone the muscle. Begin by doing various moves such as squats and lunges using only your body weight before moving on to using weights.

## ***Flexibility Training***

You can end your cardio and strength workouts with slow and static stretching for about 10 seconds per stretch. Or you can do a stretching session on its own. For those who are new to exercising, working out with a trainer in the gym is highly recommended.

A trainer can guide you in doing the different moves that are appropriate to your fitness level. Your trainer will teach you the proper position and placement of your body as you go through the different exercises. If the gym is not your thing, you can join a yoga or pilates class.

Both disciplines are great for building strength and flexibility, too, and a certified instructor will be able to guide you as you go through the workout. Doing sports that you enjoy is also good exercise. Whether it is running, swimming, or playing tennis, sports can increase your stamina and build your strength, as well.

Dancing is another amazing exercise that does not only increase your heart rate, it is also a great confidence booster, and to mention, fun! You can try joining a Zumba class or do ballroom dancing. The instructors are also well-equipped in guiding students from all fitness levels.

Working out at home is another option. The Internet is full of various resources and materials to help you exercise. You can also download a fitness app on your phone to guide you in every move. Exercising in front of a mirror will help ensure that your posture is correct.

The most difficult part of exercising is actually starting to exercise. Exercising regularly can help you form the habit. When exercising, you must listen to your body and know when to stop or lessen the intensity. Never rush yourself in achieving your goals and give yourself enough time to reach them.

Last but certainly not least, don't forget to enjoy working out. There is no sense in working out if you see it as a form of punishment. Find ways to make it fun for you, and before you know it, you will be reaping the benefits of a healthy and fit body.

## Intense Workouts for Health and Fitness



There are several benefits to working out, we all know that.

Regular physical activity can build strength, boost immunity, improve posture, and can also lead to weight loss, which further lowers the risk for chronic illnesses and disease.

However, regular exercise employing the same repeated workout can lead to what fitness experts call the workout plateau.

A workout plateau happens when our body gets used to the rigor of the workout and could signal that you need to up the intensity level of your exercise routine.

Changing up your workout and gradually increasing the intensity is the key to seeing results consistently. A good intense workout is one that uses your whole body and keeps your heart rate at 70% of your maximum recommended rate for your age.

For comparison, a moderate workout may only register about 50-60% maximum heart rate.

This simply means that an intense workout is one that would be difficult for you to carry on a conversation without having to catch your breath.

### **High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT)**

You may have heard of the term HIIT being used by several fitness gurus nowadays. HIIT is more than just a string of letters. It refers to an intense type of workout that incorporates high-intensity exercises like doing sprints and jumps or even running or cycling with very short rests in between.

Typically, a HIIT workout will require you to perform at a maximum energy level and do an active rest afterward. While in the active rest phase, you do lower-intensity moves like walking or swaying your arms to keep your heart raised but not extended.

The work-rest-work pattern is what makes HIIT a hit among fitness enthusiasts. Not only do you maximize your calorie burn while on HIIT, but you also continue to burn calories after you work out.

HIIT workouts can also be incorporated with weights and resistance bands to further build muscle, which can help in burning more calories even when you're done with the exercise.

A 20-minute HIIT workout trumps running at a steady pace for an hour in terms of caloric expenditure, meaning you burn more calories in a shorter amount of time.

If you are looking into doing HIIT workouts as a way to challenge yourself, it is important to keep in mind that these exercises are intended to be performed at a maximum energy level, so be prepared to sweat.

For those who are new to exercising or for people with heart conditions, it is best to consult your doctor first before going into any type of exercise routine, but especially one involving extreme exertion.

### **HIIT for Beginners**

Called the Timmons method, this entry-level HIIT workout consists of 20 seconds of intense work followed by active recovery for two minutes. While in active recovery, you can do low-intensity moves or continue running or cycling at a less intense rate.

If active recovery is too much for you at this point, you can do a complete rest for two minutes, instead. Do the entire circuit three times.

### **HIIT for Intermediate Level**

If you have been exercising regularly, you can double the amount of work (40 seconds) and cut the active rest period in half. You can perform the entire routine six to eight times.

### **HIIT for Advanced Level**

To really amp up your exercise, advanced HIIT requires you to work at different levels or blocks. You'll start with 30 seconds of exercise at 30% intensity, followed by 20 seconds at 60% intensity, and ends with 10 seconds going at maximum intensity.

## **Some Precautions Before Exercising**

HIIT exercises require you to perform at a maximum intensity level to be highly effective. Loads of energy is needed for you to successfully finish one HIIT routine.

For days when you feel you lack energy, you can probably skip HIIT and substitute with a lower-intensity routine. Recovery days are also vital in HIIT. While doing HIIT exercises every day can help you lose weight faster, it can also make you lose muscle mass.

Allow yourself to recover from HIIT by doing low-intensity workouts or by only lifting weights for that session. By doing so, you are not just losing fat, you're building muscle, as well.

High-intensity Interval Training is an intense type of workout that can truly challenge even the fittest and the strongest. It is an effective way to lose fat and helps you fight off life-threatening illnesses.

HIIT exercises are also versatile and can be done in the gym, at home, or with running or cycling. Don't let its name intimidate you, HIIT can be adapted even for beginners.

So go ahead, challenge yourself and do a HIIT workout today!

## Improve Poor Posture for Better Health and Fitness



Your posture has a profound effect on all the different parts and functioning of the body. Good posture is so much more than a straight back.

However, a good posture is certainly characterized by having a straight spine, where the muscles surrounding the spine are stable and can support the weight of the entire body equally.

Your body is upright but not stiff, whereby you are still able to move freely.

For some people, years of bad posture can make it difficult to correct. They may not even be aware that they have a permanent slouch. The good news is that there are several ways to improve an incorrect posture, and we will discuss that shortly.

First, let's take a look at how improving posture can address certain health issues and make you feel a whole lot better.

### **Address Chronic Back Pain**

Bad posture puts unnecessary pressure on your lower back. Prolonged slouching stresses the spine, which causes chronic back pain. An incorrect posture also causes intervertebral discs, ligaments, and muscles in the back to become painful, as they are not properly aligned.

In many cases, chronic back pain can be reduced or alleviated by correcting a bad posture.

### **Lessen Headaches**

If you often experience headaches that don't seem to go away, it could be because of your slouching. Incorrect posture can also lead to tension headaches, as neck muscles, especially the ones at the back of the neck, become strained which then leads to headaches.

When posture is corrected, there is less strain and pressure on the neck, and headaches can be lessened.

### **Lessen Muscle and Joint Tension**

Improper alignment due to bad posture can cause muscle and joint pains, especially on the shoulders and the neck. When our heads are overextended due to bad posture, our neck, shoulders, and upper back become strained, causing unnecessary muscle and joint tension.

This strain on the muscles can result in fatigue, as these muscle groups are not being used the way they are supposed to be used. This can also lead to early degeneration of certain muscles due to misuse.

### **Improve Digestion and Circulation**

Slouching can compress vital organs like the heart, lungs, and intestines. If organs are compressed, they don't get to work properly and can lead to decreased blood and air circulation and even problems with digestion.

In order for blood to properly circulate throughout the body, there should be an alignment of the spine. The same goes for oxygen. Air intake can be compromised because of poor posture.

### **Strengthens The Core**

Having a strong core is important in keeping our balance. The core helps stabilize the entire body, and a bad posture can lead to a weak core. If our core is weak, we may have problems with balancing and can be more prone to accidents.

### **How to Improve Your Posture**

Did your mother or grandmother ever put a book on your head to make you stand straight? It can certainly help you stand tall, but you can't have a book balanced on your head all day.

However, there are other effective ways to practice standing up tall.

Here's how:

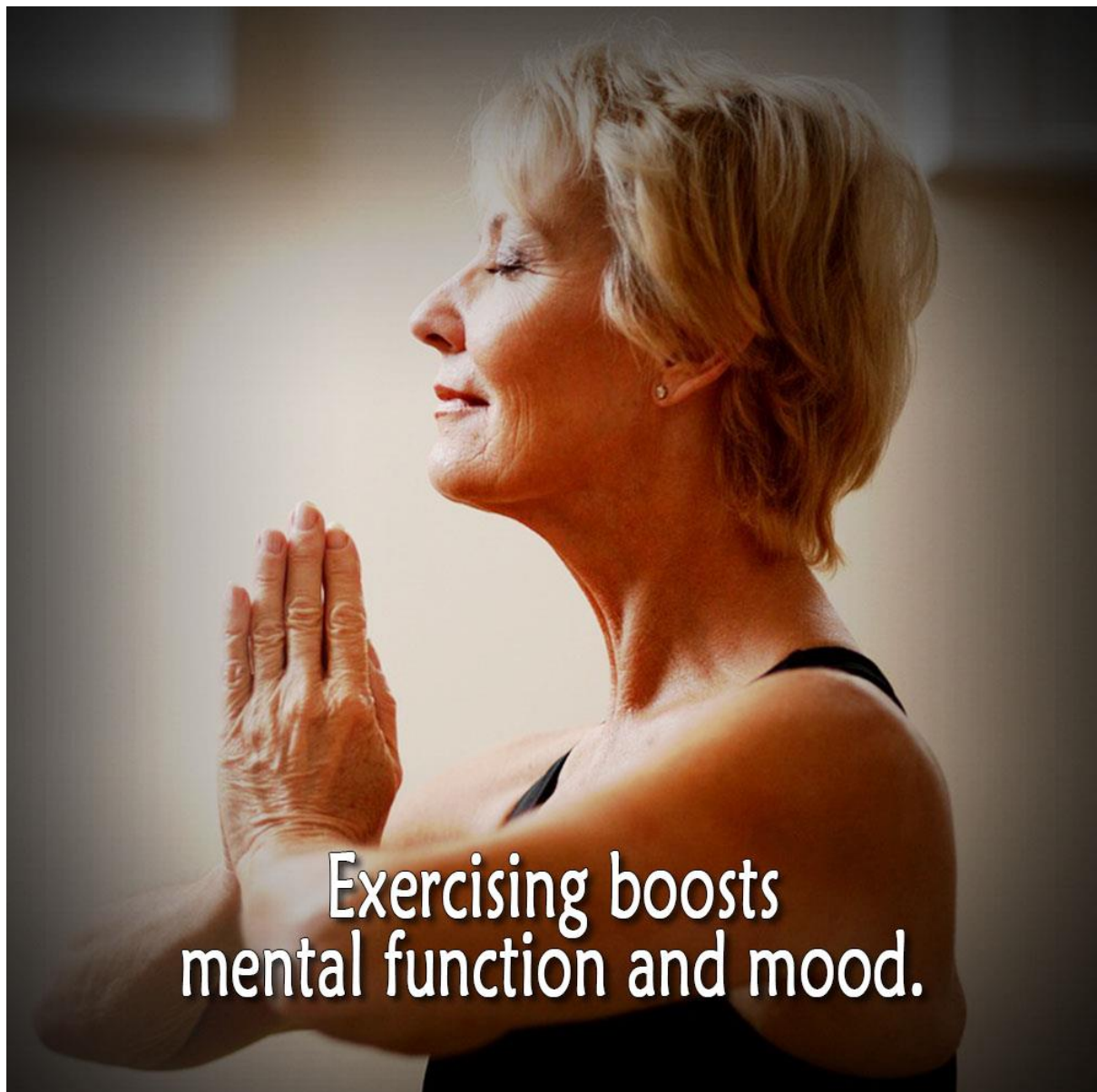
1. Catch yourself slouching and be aware of your posture.
2. Avoid slumping on your desk.
3. Beware of the "text neck" or the overextension of the neck.
4. Adjust your desk chair to accommodate a good alignment.
5. Do some exercises to correct your posture, such as the bridge, the plank, back extensions, and thigh stretches.

Posture affects different parts of the body, but because it occurs over time, won't notice the effects until they are ingrained. Bad posture can lead to muscle pains, aches, and can even affect the performance of different internal organs.

Being aware of our stance is the first step to better posture. It is easy to get comfortable with slouching, but if we are aware of our posture, we can start to correct it right away.

As you can see exercise can help in improving our posture. Good posture brings many benefits, and correcting poor posture is a great way towards better health for the rest of your life.

## Exercise is Good for Your Memory and Brain Health



We all know that exercising is good for the body, but it can also boost mental function and mood. There are many reasons why people decide to exercise, and most of the time, it is related to physical health.

However, you can also develop a sharper memory, better cognitive abilities, and a more positive disposition.

New studies reveal that our brain greatly benefits from exercise the same way our heart, lungs, and muscles do. So what's the connection between doing squats and brain health?

## **Brain Benefits of Exercising**

Several research studies show that exercising has several positive effects linked to the brain and mental health.

Here are some of the findings.

### ***Better Focus and Mental Sharpness***

If you get easily distracted at work, you might want to give exercising a try. Regularly exercising can make the brain more receptive to new information. That is because the increase in oxygen to the brain from exercising can promote brain plasticity. As a result, new connections in the brain are formed faster.

In a study done in Holland, university students were asked to do quick aerobic exercises in between long lectures. The exercise helped students concentrate better and even allowed them to be better at multi-tasking.

### ***Improves Memory***

Performing aerobic exercises, or exercises that increase heart rate, not only improve heart health but has been found to be beneficial for our memory.

The increase in oxygen supply to the brain also increases the size of the hippocampus which is the part of the brain that is related to memory and verbal aptitude.

A number of studies also revealed that people who regularly exercise with moderate intensity for six months increased the volume of the different regions in their brains that are associated with thinking and memory, particularly the prefrontal cortex and the medial temporal cortex.

### ***Boosts Mood***

Time and again runners and fitness enthusiasts alike love talking about the high they experience during and/or after a workout session, and it's a real thing. Studies show that a good aerobic session where your heart is constantly working at an increased heart rate can boost endorphins levels or what is often referred to as the "happy" hormones.

Aerobic exercise can produce an anti-depressant effect as stress hormones drop the more we exercise. Exercise can also improve sleep which can make us feel more energized in the morning, both physically and mentally.

### ***Slows Down Cognitive Decline***

Regular physical activity can not just slow down physical degeneration, but it can also help slow down a person's cognitive decline. Exercising can improve the brain's function and can also protect our brain from memory loss.

The workout itself does not even have to be strenuous. Health experts recommend a minimum of 30 minutes of brisk walking at least three times a week to slow down the effects of dementia.

### ***Helps With Creativity***

Many artists and writers say that taking a brief walk outdoors helps them whenever they hit a creativity block. Well, there is a scientific reason behind their claim. Aside from the fact that nature and some fresh air are good for you, walking and other moderate exercises can boost creativity, according to studies.

Exercising is not just a physical activity, it can also become a mental activity. With regular exercise, we can improve our focus, cognitive functions, mood, and it can even help us become more creative.

All of these are helpful in our work and other daily tasks. Our entire bodies benefit from exercising, literally from our heads down to our toes. So we are not only building a fit and healthy body but a sound and sharp mind too!

## Ways to Improve Your Flexibility with Stretching



People exercise for different reasons. Some to lose weight, as exercise is without a doubt a very effective weight loss strategy. Others exercise to get stronger muscles or to improve their cardiovascular fitness.

Still, others exercise to get healthier overall and lessen their chances of developing sickness. Whatever reasons people have as to why they exercise, exercise is good for the body, the mind, and our overall wellness. However, there are many different types of exercise.

That makes exercising a lot more interesting with so many routines on offer. There are actually four broad types of exercises and all these are related to our fitness goals; strength, balance, flexibility, and endurance.

They're sometimes used interchangeably, and ideally, good fitness routines should consist of all four. However, one does not necessarily have to perform all these routines daily. Having variety is good for maintaining fitness.

### **What Flexibility Exercises Are For**

One of the most important goals for exercising is improving one's flexibility. As we age and unconsciously lessen our range of movement, our muscles tend to get shorter. Taking an active role in maintaining their length can be crucial for us to avoid unnecessary injuries or muscle strain.

We can continually improve our muscles' length and maintain safe movement without experiencing discomfort every time we try to move, by improving our flexibility. Flexibility exercises or routines aren't always the most exciting; some people simply find them boring, but it is crucial because our level of flexibility ensures that our workouts are safe and effective.

There are various types of stretching techniques that can help improve an individual's flexibility. Stretching is not just one exercise routine. But what these exercises do is stretch the muscles, enabling us to become more flexible, so we can do other types of exercises more easily without strain or unnecessary injury.

### **Stretching Techniques that Help With Flexibility**

#### ***Static Stretching***

Static stretching is the most widely known type of stretching and it is conducted by stretching a group of muscles to a safe maximum point and maintaining that position for at least 30 seconds, or longer.

## ***Dynamic Stretching***

Whereas static stretching holds the stretch movement in place for more than 30 seconds, dynamic stretching necessitates continuous movement of more than a single pattern. A few examples of dynamic stretching are leg swings, arm swings, or torso twists.

Dynamic stretching is often conducted to improve a person's flexibility in a particular activity, whether that is to prepare for a race or practice a sport. But it should be noted that it doesn't involve jerky movements or bounces.

## ***Ballistic Stretching***

Ballistic stretching often involves forcing a part of the body to go beyond its normal range of movement. It utilizes the momentum of a moving force, often the limb, attempting to force movement beyond the normal range.

Because of that, ballistic stretching could lead to injury as it doesn't allow the muscle group to get used to a certain motion, or even relax in a particular stretch position.

By repeatedly activating the stretch reflex, it can cause the muscles to tighten up instead. Given this, ballistic stretching isn't always considered helpful or useful. However, it is often conducted for athletic drills, and can sometimes be safely performed when preceded by static stretching.

What is important to remember is that to improve your flexibility you need to stretch! Whatever stretching technique works for you, just do it. Your range of motion and flexibility will keep your body in the best of health.

So don't forget to stretch every day!

## Exercises to Improve Your Balance



Balance or stability might not be the most common reason people go to the gym or start an exercise routine.

It's a lot more common to hear people go to the gym and exercise so they can lose some weight, get healthier, or become stronger, but rarely do we hear people say, "I exercise to work on my balance or stability."

Balance is one of the most important and also among the greatest benefits people can get from exercise.

However, the reality is that it isn't given as much focus. Or at least, it's not as commonly acknowledged as other fitness goals like developing strength, endurance, or flexibility.

### **What Are Balancing Exercises For?**

Balancing exercises mainly work to improve our core muscles. As the core is our body's main balance center, having a strong core allows us to gain more control over our body, maintain a good body posture, and overall, increase our body's movement capabilities.

On a very practical level, improved stability or sense of body balance can aid us in our daily activities, from carrying loads of items, walking, going up and down the stairs, as well as running and making other athletic activities easier.

Having a good balance also helps improve our fitness level and health, generally speaking. A good sense of balance can help prevent or minimize the risk of injury, or the tendency to experience a bad fall; this one is especially crucial amongst older adults.

### **Who Can Benefit From Balancing Exercises?**

Knowing how balance works and how important it can really be for us, it's easy to see why balance is very important amongst older people. Balance minimizes the risk of injuries and helps prevent accidents such as a bad fall.

But older people are not the only ones who can truly benefit and improve their balance or stability; it is definitely advantageous in daily life for everyone.

Balance is just as important for young kids. It can help them develop and gain more body awareness. It can also be a fun learning activity for children when integrated into some forms of learning such as whenever they're learning new vocabularies or understanding and practicing their mathematical skills.

Balance is especially important for people with an athletic lifestyle, as it can enable them to have better control over their bodies. Gaining coordination and fluidity in movement matters a lot and helps prevent injuries while engaging in an active and mobile lifestyle.

Balance is also very essential for those stricken with an illness like Parkinson's disease, as it helps them maintain mobility, independence, and good quality of life, in spite of the illness.

## **Exercises That Can Help Improve Balance**

### ***Balancing on One Leg***

This is one of the most common balancing exercises and something that almost anyone can do. It involves standing with your feet apart and your hands on your hips for balance. Then lift one foot off the floor.

Don't lift it straight out in front of you. Slightly bend your knee so your foot is behind you. Once in this position, hold steady in place for at least 30 seconds. Return to the starting position and repeat the same movement with the opposite leg.

If you need more challenge, balance with your leg on an unstable surface such as a pillow. When it comes to balancing, anything that challenges your center of gravity will improve your balance.

### ***Bean Bag Balancing***

Put a bean bag or any similar item on your shoulder or on top of your head. Then walking in a straight line, a zig-zag, or a circle, trying to maintain your posture and keep your balance while holding the bean bag secure.

Also try walking backward and stepping side to side, similarly keeping the bean bag from falling.

### ***Tightrope or Plank Walk***

Find something to help you walk in a very straight line. Then hold your arms out on both sides. Walk from one end to the next, while staying on the line. Prevent yourself from stepping to the side. Make at least 15 steps.

### ***Musical Statues***

Balancing is great for anyone of all ages, including kids. Musical statues is a great exercise to develop it. Play some music and encourage the kids to dance and move along with it.

When the music stops, they should freeze in place no matter their position. Stop the music abruptly and hold it for a few seconds to encourage them to stay in place, freezing in a balancing pose.

### ***Weight Shifts***

Weight shifts can be done by standing with your feet apart, and your weight equally distributed on both legs. Then shift your weight on the right side, lifting your left foot slightly off the floor.

Hold this position for at least 30 seconds. Once done, return to the starting position and repeat the same movements on the opposite side.

## Exercises to Strengthen Your Heart



Cardiovascular diseases can be life-threatening.

It is critical to keep a healthy heart and avoid the dangers of heart problems, high blood pressure, high blood sugar, or stroke.

Making regular exercise a part of your daily routine for life and being physically active can go a long way in preventing most heart health problems.

One of the most important organs in our bodies, the heart, is also a muscle that gets stronger and healthier with regular physical exercise. But you don't have to be an athlete to be heart-healthy.

You just have to make exercise a part of your daily routine for the rest of your life. Even walking for at least 30 minutes every day will be hugely beneficial to your long-term health.

While physical exercise is really important for the heart, not all exercises are created equal. Some exercises may focus on giving your body other benefits like flexibility or balance, but not dramatically contribute to helping you to keep a healthy heart for life.

According to Kerry Stewart Ed. D., John Hopkins exercise physiologist, *"aerobic exercises and resistance training are the most important for heart health."*

### **Aerobic Exercises**

Aerobic exercise is identified as the most beneficial exercise for an individual's cardiovascular health. It is also known as "cardio" and it helps improve circulation, which results in lower blood pressure and heart rate.

It utilizes the repetitive contraction of a large group of muscles, making the person's heart beat faster. It also increases aerobic fitness, which can be measured by a treadmill test.

Aerobic exercise helps the heart pump better, aiding cardiac output. 30 minutes of daily aerobic exercise for a minimum of five days a week is considered the ideal.

Aerobic exercise reduces the risk of developing type 2 diabetes, and for those already diagnosed with diabetes, helps them to manage their blood glucose level.

Some examples of aerobic exercises are running, brisk walking, cycling, swimming, playing sports. The best type of aerobic exercises are heart-pumping activities conducted for a minimum of 150 minutes per week.

## **Resistance Training**

Resistance training is also known as strength work. It helps to strengthen the muscles, by making them work against a force or weight. People carrying more body fat can reduce fat more effectively and create leaner muscle mass with resistance training, as it has a more specific effect on body composition.

Combined with aerobic exercise, it can work even better as there are studies that support that combining both exercises (aerobic exercise and resistance training) can help raise HDL (good cholesterol) and minimize LDL (bad cholesterol). This reduces the risk of developing cardiovascular health problems.

There are different forms of resistance training, including the use of free weights, resistance bands, weight machines, and even the person's own body weight (e.g. yoga).

Training 2-3 times a week can prove to be the most beneficial and effective for people who want to get fitter and healthier with resistance training.

## **Stretching (for Flexibility) and Balance Exercises**

It may not first appear that flexibility exercises or balancing exercises directly benefit an individual's heart health. But both can go a long way in benefitting cardiovascular fitness, through how it benefits our musculoskeletal health.

Flexibility helps us to do our exercises more effectively and avoid injuries. With sufficient flexibility, we may prevent joint pain, cramps, or unnecessary injuries that could potentially arise from more strenuous exercises like aerobic exercise or resistance training.

Flexibility exercises play an important role as they put our bodies in the right condition for conducting either aerobic exercises or resistance training without unnecessary strain or injury.

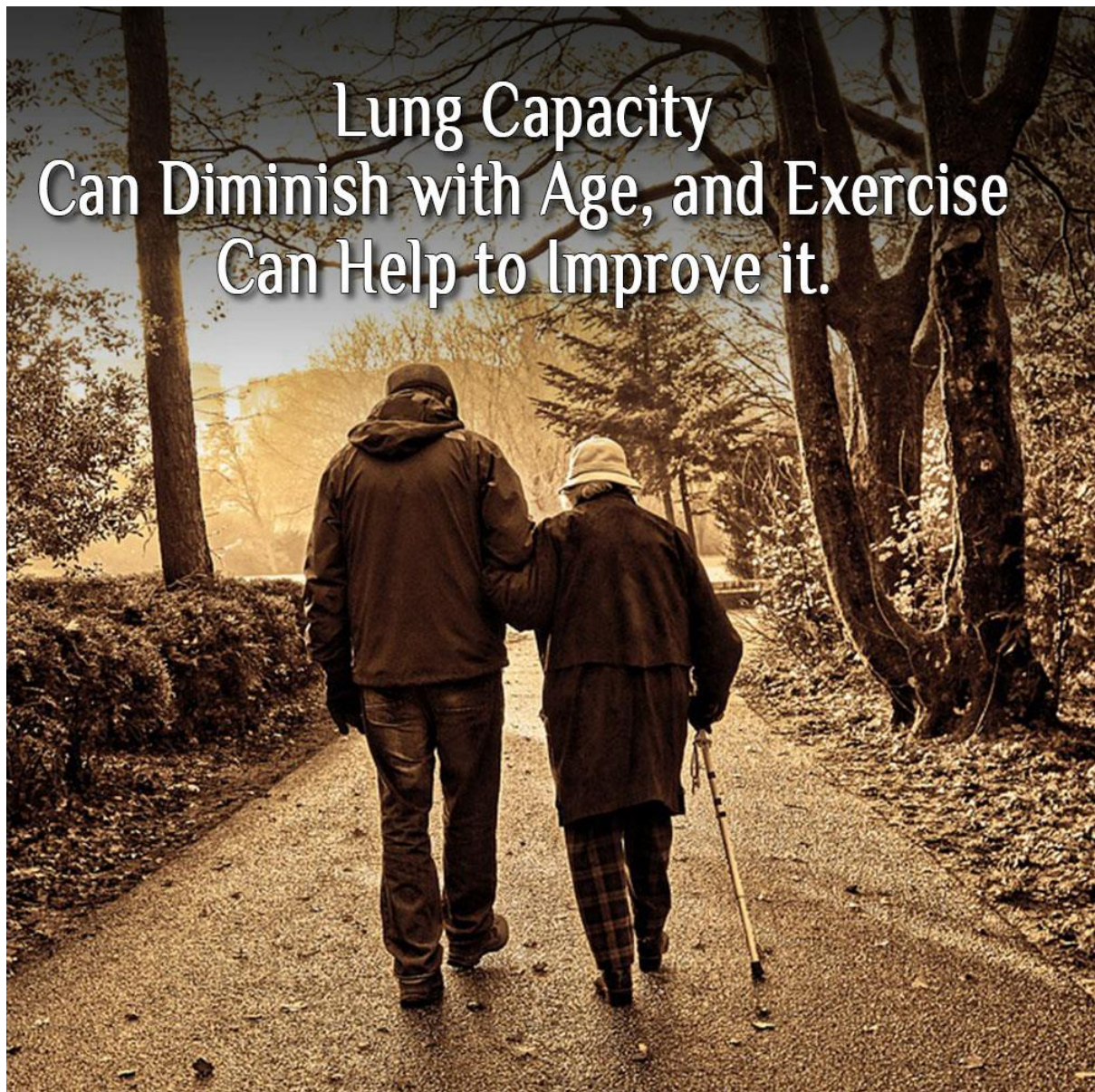
Balancing exercises on the other hand help to maintain stability and prevent falls that could likely happen also when conducting strenuous exercises.

Achieving balance and improved flexibility are still very important in making sure our body can sustain the cardiovascular exercises it needs to stay fit and healthy.

Stretching exercises may not always be the most interesting, but they can be done in the comfort of your home with some videos from the internet, making them really convenient and easy to learn.

Flexibility exercises and balancing exercises are both important in building up and strengthening our cardiovascular health.

## Breathing Exercises to Help Improve Lung Capacity



Every single breath we take is very important. It is our breath that keeps us alive. But did you know that lung capacity can diminish with age? Like most parts of our body, lung function may begin to decline and gradually decrease from our mid-20s, when our lungs reach their full development.

Lung capacity is the total amount of oxygen that our lungs can hold. As it slowly declines with age, this means that there may come a time when breathing can become especially challenging later in life. Aside from age, other factors may also contribute to the decline of our lung capacity.

Pollution, smoking, and lung diseases can all contribute to reduced lung capacity and breathing difficulties. However, certain breathing exercises provide respite from chronic lung dysfunction and certain respiratory problems.

## **Breathing Exercises That Can Improve Lung Capacity**

### ***Diaphragmatic Breathing***

Diaphragmatic breathing is also known as belly breathing. It is conducted by engaging the diaphragm, the part in our body that does most of the work to help us breathe. Diaphragmatic breathing can be done by first putting ourselves in relaxed mode while sitting down or lying down. Place one hand on the belly, and the other hand on the chest.

Inhale through the nose for two seconds (but notice how much the stomach rises) then exhale through the mouth. On the next inhalation with the nose, get the stomach to rise higher. Then exhale, making each exhalation two or three times longer than each inhalation.

To ensure that the exercise doesn't make the upper body tenser, roll your shoulders forward, and then backward. Then move the head from side to side. This breathing exercise can be very helpful for people with COPD, as it engages and strengthens the diaphragm.

### ***Pursed-Lips Breathing***

This breathing technique has the capacity to slow down our breathing, helping to reduce its work by keeping the airways open much longer. Pursed-lips breathing can make the lungs function easier, and also improve the oxygen-carbon dioxide exchange cycle.

Compared to diaphragmatic breathing, pursed-lips breathing may be easier for those who are not used to practicing breathing exercises. It is a lot easier than belly breathing and you can easily do it at home even without anyone

demonstrating it to you or supervising you. It's also easy to practice anytime, anywhere.

To practice pursed-lips breathing, inhale slowly through the nose, then purse the lips as if preparing to blow something. Then breathe out very slowly through the pursed lips; make it twice as long as when you inhaled. Then repeat.

### ***Interval Training***

Interval training helps the lungs whenever we are experiencing shortness of breath or breathlessness from strenuous exercise. It simply involves alternating between less strenuous exercises and quick, strenuous exercises.

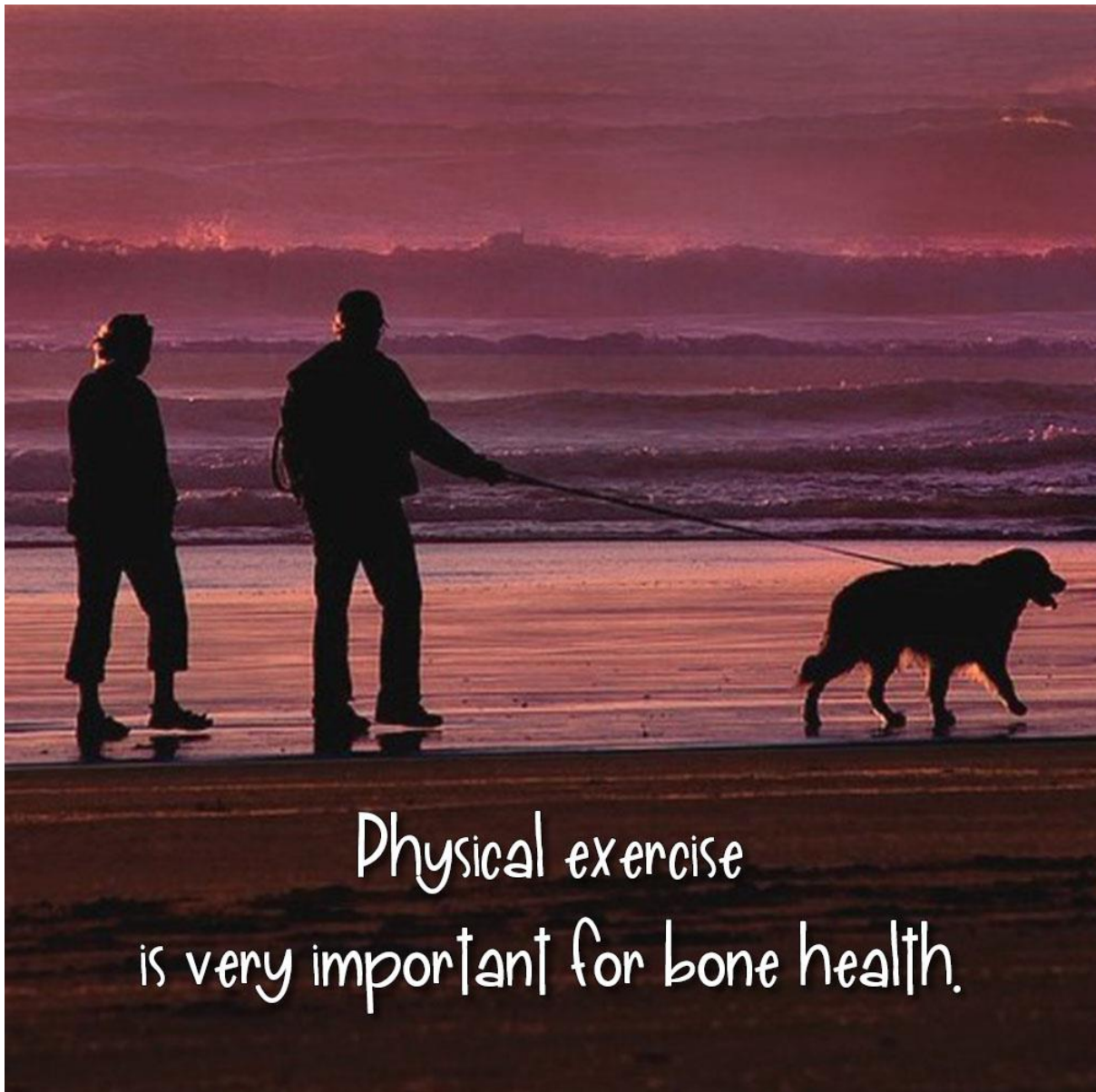
In cases where breathlessness is experienced during an exercise session, it is better to conduct interval training than simply persist with the challenging exercise non-stop. In that way, interval training can help the lungs by giving them more time to recover, before subjecting them again to an intense workout, a physically-challenging activity for the lungs, which causes breathlessness.

To demonstrate how easy it is to conduct interval training when you are feeling breathless during an exercise, let's take walking for example. Walk for 1 minute at a very fast pace, one that raises your heartbeat and causes you to feel breathless.

After 1 minute, start walking slowly, but for twice as long as the fast walk you did; do it for 2 minutes this time. Then repeat the cycle. Strength training activities like bicep curls or lunges can be similarly done for a minute also, to be followed by a slow walk for 2 or 3 minutes.

Always try to slow down for a few minutes, whenever you experience breathlessness or shortness of breath during an intense workout session. Additionally, it may also help to conduct pursed lips breathing in case the breathlessness doesn't subside.

## Exercises for Strong Bones & Improved Bone Density



Physical exercise is very important for bone health.

Any form of physical activity helps to keep the bones healthier, and aids in muscle strength, flexibility, balance, and coordination.

Bone density or the amount of bone minerals and calcium found in our bones can be measured with a BMD (bone mineral density) test.

A BMD test can effectively determine a person's bone health, risks of breaking bones, and osteoporosis. If the bone mass is low, but not low enough to qualify as 'osteoporosis,' it is known as osteopenia.

Whether a person has osteoporosis, osteopenia, or is healthy, physical exercises can further help keep the bones stronger, reduce the risk of breaking bones, and prevent accidents, injuries, or the likelihood of a bad fall.

These are helpful physical exercises that could help in building and maintaining strong bones.

### **Weight-Bearing Exercises**

Weight-bearing exercises are either high-impact or low-impact. These exercises are usually composed of activities that enable you to move against gravity while keeping an upright position.

High-impact weight-bearing exercises can effectively help in keeping the bones stronger. Some examples of high-impact weight-bearing exercises include hiking, climbing the stairs, playing tennis, high-impact aerobics, running, jogging, yoga, and even dancing.

Although high-impact exercises help to build stronger bones, people with osteoporosis or those at risk of breaking a bone should avoid such activities, or at least consult their physician first for the best advice.

Low-impact weight-bearing exercises on the other hand may be a safer alternative for people who are at risk of breaking their bones or have conditions like osteoporosis. They aid in building stronger bones but are not as strenuous as high-impact weight-bearing exercises.

A few examples of low-impact weight-bearing exercises are low-impact aerobics, fast walking on a treadmill, stair-step machines, brisk walking, and elliptical training machines.

## **Muscle-Strengthening Exercises (Resistance Training)**

Muscle-strengthening activities or exercises are another type of exercise that is recommended for maintaining stronger bones and improving bone density. These exercises enable you to move your body or your weight against gravity.

Basically, it makes the muscles work against a force, causing microscopic damage to the muscle cells. These tears are then quickly repaired by the body, making the muscle regenerate until it grows stronger than it once was.

The process of breaking down the muscle fiber is known as “catabolism,” whereas the repair process is called “anabolism.” Anabolic also means “to grow” – the exact thing that happens when the muscle fibers are broken down through resistance training exercises and experience a rapid re-growth.

Muscle-strengthening exercises are also known as weight training or strength training. They effectively increase muscle strength. It is all about using resistance to muscular contraction, in order to build strength, endurance, and size of the skeletal muscles.

But more than just the muscles, studies also show that they can help regenerate the bones, even for elderly people. It even helps improve joint function, tendon, and ligament strength too, on top of improving bone density and muscle strength.

Some examples of these types of exercises include:

- Weight lifting and the use of free weights such as kettlebells, barbells, and dumbbells.
- Use of weight machines or any devices that have adjustable seats with handles that are attached to weights or hydraulics.
- Use of resistance bands or elastic exercise bands. These provide continuous resistance when stretched or throughout a movement. They're handy and highly versatile.

- Standing, simply using your own body weight. Walking is a great way to stand tall and exercise.
- Push-ups and squats. Again, using your own body weight.
- Pilates, yoga, and Tai chi.

Both weight-bearing exercises and resistance training exercises are highly recommended for the development of strong bones. Some of them are also very practical to do, without the need for a guide or the use of machines, such as walking, jogging, climbing the stairs, push-ups and squats.

Most exercises are safe, as long as they're conducted within the right parameters.

However, people with existing health conditions such as heart problems, high blood pressure, or even osteoporosis, should consult their health care providers first before performing these exercises, especially if it involves high-impact weight-bearing workouts.

Listen to your body and try to get moving on a daily basis so your body will get used to it. A good workout routine will bring specific benefits to you in helping you build stronger bones, but it'll also contribute to a greater sense of wellbeing overall.

## Conclusion

If you don't feel like exercising, don't feel bad. Resting and recuperating, except when overruled by hunger or escaping danger, is wired into our DNA.

That served our ancestors well. But in a time when physical danger isn't ever-present and satisfying hunger requires little energy expenditure, letting our subconscious minds make decisions for us is not in our best interests.

Our bodies were designed and evolved to be physically active. When we elect not to be, our physiology alters, with cascading effects on our whole wellbeing, including our mental state.

Reading this eBook should have left you with no doubt that exercise is essential, to the extent that you can perform it. Most people can do much more exercise than they give themselves credit for.

Except in the most extreme cases, it is possible to extend yourself more. You can walk a bit more, work a bit more, lift a bit more. More often.

As explained, be realistic. Getting to a reasonable level of fitness will take time and effort. You will almost certainly experience varying degrees of discomfort, especially in the beginning.

Little-used muscles have to rebuild themselves and become stronger. Your brain will interpret this as discomfort or even pain. Your subconscious mind will encourage you to stop and go back to your 'normal'.

You know that your old normal is not healthy and is preventing you from your fullest self-expression. It is also shortening your life.

You can create a new healthier, stronger, fitter, happier normal. Get started now, and keep going.