Exercise At Any Age

Health and fitness expert says, 'Start moving now!'

Exercise is important at any age. For guidelines and expertise, I turned to Allison Stuart Kaplan. She is a group exercise instructor, yoga teacher, personal trainer and regular health and fitness contributor for Fox 2 News Detroit's *Get Fit* morning show. She is also the founder of Askinyourface.com, a sophisticated Web magazine for women.

What are the long-term benefits of exercise?

Regular exercise can help prevent many types of cancers, diabetes, obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, arthritis, osteoporosis, depression and many other potentially serious, often debilitating conditions and illness.
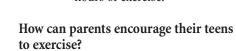
What is a good way to introduce exercise to children?

Kids can and should start exercising as early as possible. The type of exercise children will enjoy may differ depending on age. In addition to the health benefits of exercise for kids, running around and being physically active can help children to sleep better at night and reduce stress levels.

Children and adolescents should do at least 60 minutes or more of physical activity each day. The amount and type of exercise needed depends on the age and energy level of the child. Toddlers may need as much as 90 minutes per day, while preschoolers can get two hours of exercise.

How can parents encourage their teens to exercise?

Team sports or after-school activities (dance, martial arts, yoga and working out at the gym) are great choices for teens.

Plan weekend family activities that involve moving: biking, taking hikes, walk to lunch or dinner with your kids, assign chores that require moving and lifting, such as walking the dog, taking out the garbage, sweeping out the garage, carrying laundry up stairs, vacuuming, helping with grocery shopping.

Get creative, parents!

What do you tell adults who have never exercised?

I recommend starting slow and easy for short periods of time to avoid injury and excessive muscle soreness — 10-20 minutes the first few times is ideal. Try walking with a pedometer to track your steps; add 100 hundred steps a day or 500 each week. Eventually you will be walking 10,000 steps per day, approximately five miles.

What are some basic guidelines for getting started exercising? Also, what is more important — cardio or weights?

Both cardio and weight training are equally important and necessary to keep us healthy and strong. Generally speaking, cardio strengthens our heart and lungs, helps maintain a healthy weight and aids in weight loss. Weight lifting (even light weights) strengthens bones, builds lean muscle mass, improves skin tone and keeps our body burning calories for longer periods of time. My favorite workout is interval training, which combines cardio, weights and body weight work for optimal results.

What are some guidelines for exercising on a weekly basis?

Adults need a minimum of 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) of moderate-intensity aerobic activity every week and two to three days a week of muscle-strengthening exercise that hits all of the major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders and arms).

What websites do you can recommend for readers who want to learn more?

Sign up for myyogaonline.com for yoga videos to practice at home; Askinyourface.com for workouts and tons of motivation and information regarding your whole health, and kidsinactionaction.org for basic guidelines for children. □

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