Physical Activity, Exercise & Physical Fitness

Is There a Difference?

Health care professionals, the media and now the White House. Everywhere we turn today we hear how important exercise and physical activity are to long life and good health. But what exactly constitutes physical activity and exercise and what’s the difference between the two? Let’s take a closer look at how these terms relate to you and what you can do to improve your overall health no matter where you are on the fitness spectrum.

Physical activity involves any bodily movement such as walking to and from work, taking the stairs instead of elevators and escalators, gardening, and doing household chores. For inactive people, there’s no doubt that increasing this sort of activity can reduce risk for disease and improve health.

Exercise, however, is a type of physical activity that requires planned, structured, and repetitive bodily movement with the intent of improving or maintaining your physical fitness level. Exercise can be accomplished through activities such as cycling, dancing, walking, swimming, yoga, working out at the gym, or running, just to name a few. Regular exercise, depending upon the kind, improves aerobic fitness, muscular strength, and flexibility.

Aerobic fitness is the ability of the body’s cardiovascular system to supply energy during continuous physical activities such as biking and running. Studies show that this type of exercise provides many health benefits such as decreasing risk for heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, type II diabetes and some cancers. The 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans state that most health benefits occur with at least 150 minutes/week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity. Examples of aerobic activities that would meet this recommendation include walking at a brisk pace, swimming, jogging, dancing, etc.

Muscular strength is the ability of the muscles to exert a force during an activity such as lifting weights. Muscle strengthening exercises involve using your muscles to work against a resistance such as your body weight, elastic bands or weights. The Physical Activity Guidelines recommend that adults participate in muscle strengthening exercises for all major muscle groups at least two days a week.

Bone strengthening exercise, or any weight-bearing activity that produces a force on the bone, is also important to overall health for children and adults. This force is usually produced by impact with the ground and results in bone growth in children and healthy maintenance of bone density in adults. Examples of bone strengthening

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Steamed Greens with Ginger & Water Chestnuts

3 cups mixed leafy greens, chosen from the following:
- bok choy (Chinese cabbage or Chinese chard), choy sum (Chinese flowering cabbage), Chinese spinach (amaranth leaves), Swiss chard leaves, stems removed, spinach leaves, stems removed
- 1 tsp. finely minced, peeled fresh ginger
- 1 tsp. finely minced fresh garlic
- 1/2 cup diced canned water chestnuts (drained and rinsed)
- 1/2 Tbsp. sesame seed oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

Keeping each type separate, place greens on plate used for steaming. Sprinkle ginger and garlic over top of greens then scatter water chestnuts on top. Sprinkle oil evenly over all.

Steam until greens are tender, watching carefully, as they will only take about 30 seconds. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve immediately. Makes 4 servings.

Nutritional Information: Per serving: 32 calories, 2 g. total fat (<1 g. saturated fat), 4 g. carbohydrates, 1 g. protein, 1 g. dietary fiber, 28 mg. sodium.

To see more AICR recipes visit http://www.aicr.org/

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Slow Cooker Savvy

Put your slow cooker to good use preparing healthy, easy-to-prepare dishes for your family. Learn the basics of slow cooking, safety tips, and more!

May 13, 2010
2:00 - 3:30 p.m.
Cost is $5.00
Register by May 6

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Detox Your Home

Learn how to lessen your footprint on the environment, conserve our natural resources, and save money through Low Impact Living.

April 22, 2010
2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Cost is $5.00
Register by April 15

This class will also be offered on April 22 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Jackson County Extension Office.

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activities include jumping, walking, jogging, and weight lifting exercises. As you can see, some exercises such as walking, jogging serve a dual purpose of strengthening our bones and our aerobic system.

Lastly, flexibility is the ability of the joints to move through a full range of motion. Stretching exercises can be an excellent way of increasing flexibility. While the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans do not include specific recommendations for increasing flexibility, some individuals such as dancers and some athletes may need to include flexibility activities as part of their exercise regimen.

The bottom line is that increasing your everyday physical activity and regularly participating in aerobic, muscle and bone strengthening exercises are all beneficial to your health and will improve your quality of life.

So what are you waiting for? It’s time to heed the advice and get active.

If you’d like to know more about the benefits of starting an exercise program or just increasing your everyday physical activities, visit: http://www.health.gov/PAGuidelines/

Source: http://www.extension.org/
Family Gardening Tips

Cynthia Davis Klemmer, the Children's Education Coordinator at the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, suggests these gardening activity tips for families:

- Start small. Window boxes or containers, because of their small size, can actually turn out to be rather luxurious gardens.
- Recycle clean bleach and milk containers. Cut off the tops and use them as planters.
- Be willing to put up with a less-than-perfect looking garden: crooked rows and weeds are okay.
- Leave an area where kids can dig, even after planting. This is often their favorite part of gardening. Look for earthworms together!
- Get some child-sized tools from a local nursery or garden center. Try to find tools that look genuine so the kids will feel like real gardeners. Can't afford it? Plastic spoons and shovels work well in window boxes.
- Make a secret place in the garden for your kids. Leave a space between the stalks of easy-to-grow sunflowers or bean poles so they can crawl "inside." Make a chicken wire animal and train ivy around: instant topiary!
- Kids like extremes, so plant huge flowers, like sunflowers, and small vegetable plants, like cherry tomatoes. Plant fragrant flowers or herbs like peonies, lavender, and chocolate or pineapple mint. Show your kids how to rub the herbs between their fingers to get a really good whiff.
- Teach your kids how to compost. Find a place behind a tree, or dig a hole in the ground. Don't add anything that ever swam, walked, or flew. Toss in rinds and peels from fruit, coffee grounds, tea bags, eggshells. When it turns black and crumbly (this will take several months) you can mix it with soil and use this for fertilizer for your garden. Don't forget to put your gloves on first.
- Look in the children's section of your library or bookstore for both gardening how-to books and storybooks. "Ready, Set, Grow! A Guide to Gardening," by Suzanne Frutig Bales, teaches youngsters about specific plants. "Kids Garden!" by Avery Hart and Paul Mantell includes information on "sowing and growing" as well as activities for kids ages 4 and up.

If you're interested in more organized children's programs, check with local parks departments or public gardens to see what they offer.

by Cindy Bond at http://fun.familyeducation.com/outdoor-activities/earth-day/29440.html

Important Fox Medicare Part D Information

SHIIP Events for Medicare Recipients Displaced by Fox Insurance Company’s Medicare Contract Termination

Insurance Commissioner Wayne Goodwin announced the schedule of SHIIP events across the state aimed at helping the 24,000 North Carolina Medicare recipients affected by the sudden termination of Fox’s Medicare Part D contract by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

“Recipients currently enrolled in a Fox Grand or Fox Value Medicare Part D prescription drug plan need to change their coverage by April 30,” said Commissioner Goodwin. “SHIIP counseling sites across North Carolina are available to help these folks identify other plans that are available to them.” Goodwin added that Fox recipients can also contact SHIIP’s Raleigh call center with questions, 1-800-443-9354.

Fox Part D prescription drug plan recipients who do not change their plan by April 30 will be automatically enrolled in a plan selected by Medicare; the auto-enrolled plan may or may not be the best fit for the recipients’ needs.

SHIIP can help recipients find the best plan for their needs and help them enroll in their selected plan.

CMS terminated their Part D contract with Fox Insurance Company of New York after an onsite audit of the plan and its services revealed the plan had significant deficiencies that jeopardized the health and safety of Fox members. CMS found that Fox committed a series of violations, including improperly denying its members coverage of critical HIV, cancer, and seizure medications.

SHIIP is a division of the North Carolina Department of Insurance that offers free, unbiased information about Medicare, Medicare prescription drug coverage, Medicare Advantage, long-term care insurance and other health insurance information. SHIIP’s trained volunteers provide one-on-one counseling in all 100 counties.
What's Happening?
Call Swain County Cooperative Extension at 488-3848 for more information.

Eat Smart Move More Weigh Less

Eat Smart Move More Weigh Less is a program that will explore behaviors that help you achieve and maintain a healthy weight by living mindfully and creating new, lifelong habits. Weekly 60-minute meetings include weigh-ins, goal setting, nutrition education, counseling and support.

Tuesdays
12:00 to 1:00 p.m.
Marianna Black Library
Cost for 15 weeks is $25
You can join at any time

ON-GOING PROGRAMS

Back to Basics - features a series of multi-faceted educational seminars that deal with building a sustainable, self-reliant thriving home as well as specific ways to extend financial resources, such as green cleaning, cooking, home gardening and food preservation. Call for more details.

(SHIIP) Senior Health Insurance Information Program is a consumer information division of the NC Department of Insurance that assists people with choosing a Medicare Part D prescription drug plan. Call 488-3848 for an appointment.

Pressure Canner Testing: Did you know that if you have a pressure canner with a dial gauge, you should have it tested every year. Please call us if you need to have your gauge tested.