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**Exercise and Lifestyle Change – Starting Up and Pressing On**

The massive health benefits of exercise and increased physical activity will be outlined in this handout. Terms such as exercise and physical activity are used interchangeably. **Do you know that physical inactivity, because it is so bad for your health, is considered by many to be a separate disease!!**

**1. The Health Benefits of Exercise**

- There are enormous health benefits which help us many ways:
  - Physical – reduction in obesity, heart disease (blood fats, blood pressure), diabetes, bowel cancer, asthma, joint disorders, improved bone strength, recovery from surgery, etc..
  - Psychological / mental health – reduction in depression, anxiety, improved sense of well-being
  - Community benefits – improved community activities, influencing others, reduced public health costs
- Performed correctly, introducing exercise and physical activity which suit your personal needs may be life-changing
- The changes in your lives may inspire others (e.g. family, friends)

**2 Getting Started**

- What are your needs?
  - This may include - weight loss, improving heart function, being less short of breath, feeling stronger, being better at your sport, looking good for the summer!!
- Start thinking differently
  - Lifestyle change – walking more, using stairs, don't take the closest car space, don't use the TV remote at home, etc
- Be checked out if your not sure
  - Untrained over 40; untrained and overweight; health or injury concerns; not confident
- What happens when you exercise?

Your body's response to moderate intensity exercise normally includes: faster heart rate, faster breathing, feeling warmer, slight swelling of the hands and feet, mild to moderate perspiration, mild muscular aches for a day or two afterwards if you are not used to the physical activity.

The following information is for those who require more detail and may have already commenced a regime.

- How often? How hard?

To enjoy a health benefit – **30 minutes or more of moderate intensity** exercise most days of the week (for those with stable medical conditions).

Exercise **intensity** refers to how hard your body is working during physical activity. For maximum health benefits, the goal is to work hard but not too hard. There are a variety of ways to measure your exercise intensity to make sure your body is getting the most out of every workout.

How hard should you exercise – the ‘**intensity**’ – walking as an example

Intensity	% HR Max	Symptoms	Examples
Very Light	<50	Conversational, can sing	Walking, swimming
Light	20-63	Conversational	Brisk walking, dancing, table-tennis, golf, gardening
Moderate	64-76	Short sentences, slight sweating	Brisk walking to light jog, tennis, cycling on hills
Hard	77-93	Severe breathlessness and sweating	Fast running, climbing stairs, wood-chopping

‘%HR Max’ refers to the percentage of ones maximal heart rate

Some common target heart rate ranges for each age group (moderate):

Age	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65
HR	140-170	136-165	133-162	130-157	126-153	122-149	119-145	115-140	112-136	109-132

- When should you stop?

**Warning signs** If you experience any of the following symptoms, stop exercising and seek medical help: extreme breathlessness or breathing problems such as wheezing or coughing which persist; chest pain or pressure; extreme perspiration; dizziness, fainting; severe muscle or joint pain or cramps; nausea; or extreme and long-lasting fatigue after exercising.

### 3 Barriers to Exercise and Pressing On

You may have **previous injuries**, uncertainty about your **medical conditions** or simply **not enjoying** exercise at all. These are all good reasons to speak with your GP. Alternately, **our Sports Physicians are happy to help you** in this way. It is very rare that problems are insurmountable. Persist until you find a routine that works for you. Then invite others to join you!