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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!