



Health@News

Your Guide to a Healthier Lifestyle

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INACTIVITY: A HEALTH HAZARD

Regular physical activity is vital to good health. Unfortunately, many Americans live a sedentary lifestyle and are not getting an adequate amount of activity to provide health benefits. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that, despite the proven benefits of physical activity, more than 50 percent of American adults do not get enough of it to provide health benefits and 25 percent of adults are not active at all in their leisure time. Sedentary individuals put themselves at risk for cardiovascular disease, stroke, obesity, diabetes, colon cancer, osteoporosis, and other chronic diseases and conditions.

PLAY DEFENSE AGAINST DISEASE

Along with maintaining a healthy weight, eating a nutritious, well-balanced diet, and having age-appropriate screenings and exams, being active on a regular basis is an important way to preserve health and well-being. Physical activity decreases the risk of developing or dying from some of the leading causes of illness in the United States, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Specifically, regular physical activity:

- Decreases the risk of dying prematurely from heart disease
- Helps maintain a healthy weight
- Reduces the risk of developing certain cancers, including cancers of the colon and breast
- Decreases the risk of developing diabetes
- Reduces high blood pressure, as well as the risk of developing the condition
- Helps older adults to become stronger and reduces likelihood of falls
- Promotes psychological well-being, and decreases feelings of depression and anxiety



MEN AND EXERCISE

Research indicates that as many as 50 percent of American men do not get an adequate amount of physical activity. What many men do not realize is that physical activity is not optional as far as their health is concerned. Lack of physical activity is a major risk factor for serious diseases including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and some cancers. The good news? Physical activity does not necessarily have to be strenuous to be beneficial. In fact, by participating in regular moderate-intensity physical activity, men can achieve health benefits. Men who have achieved a moderate level of fitness are much less likely to die early than those who have a low level of fitness.

THE BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Regular physical activity helps to control weight, and according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly 69 percent of males over age 20 are overweight. It also decreases a man's risk of dying of coronary heart disease, the number one killer in America, and decreases the risk for developing high blood pressure, heart attack, colon cancer, and diabetes, and may reduce the risk for stroke.

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PUT A STOP TO A SEDENTARY LIFESTYLE

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services defines a sedentary lifestyle as engaging in no leisure-time physical activity—exercises, sports, and physically active hobbies—in a two-week period. For many people, transitioning from a sedentary to an active lifestyle can be a daunting task. Fortunately, physical activity does not have to be strenuous to be beneficial. Regardless of age, individuals can improve their health and well-being by participating in regular, moderate-intensity activities. Moderate-intensity activities include walking briskly, shooting baskets, doubles tennis, many types of dancing, and bicycling on level terrain. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggest that adults strive to engage in moderate-intensity physical activities for at least 30 minutes on 5 or more days of the week.



Men and Exercise continued from previous page...

HOW MUCH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY DO I REALLY NEED?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggest that adults should strive either to engage in moderate-intensity physical activities for at least 30 minutes on 5 or more days of the week or to engage in vigorous-intensity physical activity 3 or more days per week for 20 or more minutes per occasion. Previously inactive people who start exercise programs should begin with short sessions and gradually build up to a more intense level of activity.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES TO BEING PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

I want to spend my free time with my family, not on a treadmill. Consider hiking or biking as a family on the weekends or after work. Better yet, take your spouse out dancing and consider planning an active family vacation. In addition, do work around the house or in the yard.

I'm too out of shape to take on a physical activity regimen. Fortunately, physical activity does not have to be difficult to provide benefits. Start slowly and work up to moderate-intensity activities. Consider wearing a pedometer throughout the day to track your steps.

My job eats up my entire day. If possible, walk or bike to work, or park your vehicle further from your building. Throughout the day, take the stairs rather than the elevator. Walk to talk to your co-workers instead of calling or sending an e-mail.

Joining a gym doesn't interest me. There are many ways to achieve regular physical activity without joining a gym. For example, consider joining a softball or basketball team or starting your own team with friends and co-workers. By seeking out activities that you enjoy, you will be more likely to stick with physical activity.

I like to watch television in my spare time. Consider purchasing a treadmill or stationary bicycle and exercise while watching your favorite programs or movies.

If you are overweight, have a chronic medical condition, or lead a sedentary lifestyle, consult your physician before beginning a physical activity program.



St. Luke's Healthy Living Classes and Programs

Essentials for a Healthy Weight

Thursday, January 24 • 6:30 to 8 p.m.

A registered dietitian discusses how healthy food recipes and appropriate portion sizes can make a big difference in your waistline. Then get your mind set to reach your healthy weight with behavioral tips from a licensed professional counselor. The program includes a group weight-loss hypnosis.

Girl Talk

Saturday, January 26 • 1 to 4 p.m.

This special event for mothers and daughters ages 11 and older includes a physician panel discussion and information on nutrition, exercise and healthy communication skills for life. Catherine L. Hanaway, United States Attorney, will discuss internet safety.

A Fair of the Heart

Saturday, March 8 • 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. (Registration and Exhibits open at 8:15 a.m.)

Heart specialists provide the latest information on prevention of heart disease. The program includes a St. Luke's physician panel moderated by Fox 2 News Anchor, Tom O'Neal. Evonne Weinhaus, LCSW, LPC, acclaimed national speaker, author and therapist presents "Face Your Fears, Replace Old Behaviors and Embrace a New Lifestyle."

Classes and programs are free. Call 314-542-4848 or visit www.stlukes-stl.com to register or for a complete listing of classes.



Our specialty is you.

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