

Define Yourself

health coaching



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Check out defineyourself-coaching.com for past newsletters, inspiring podcasts, and more about the components of your health.

I welcome your thoughts.

Simple Truths

Your hearts know in silence the secrets of the days and nights, But your ears thirst for the sound of your heart's knowledge.

You would know in words that which you have always known in thought.

Part of The Prophet, Kahlil Gibran

Exercise is Medicine – let me count the ways.

1. We all know that physical exercise reduces the risk of heart disease by lowering cholesterol. But how does it work?

a. One way exercise can help **lower cholesterol** is by helping you lose, or maintain weight. Being **overweight** tends to increase the amount of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) in your blood, the kind of lipoprotein that's been linked to heart disease.

b. A second way is that the medicine "exercise" stimulates enzymes that help move LDL from the blood (and blood-vessel walls, where they tend to build up and can cause a blood clot) to the liver. From there, the cholesterol is excreted. So the more you exercise, the more LDL your body expels. All this without the use of prescribed medicine. Perhaps there is something to the idea that given the right motivation our bodies can heal themselves.

2. Having high blood pressure can also kill you. It increases your chances of suffering a heart attack, stroke, or kidney disease. Exercise usually lowers high blood pressure because high blood pressure is determined by blood volume. Exercise reduces your blood volume, thus reducing high blood pressure and stress on the arterial walls. You can lower your blood pressure with just one bout of a good sweat session.

3. Common sense also tells us why being overweight may be a risk factor. Large quantities of refined foods that provide lots of calories but little nourishment does not serve our bodies well. It can lead to a low inflammatory state, which is now related to heart attacks.

4. Physical exercise has a multitude of effects on our brain and nerves. New nerve cells are generated with regular exercise and we form new blood vessels to supply the needed nutrients to the newly created nerve cells, and their surrounding tissues.

Exercise your power of choice, chose quality and longevity of life over a less active lifestyle.

Distinction: Self efficacy vs. behavior modification

Self-Efficacy – is a confidence in self to successfully perform a particular behavior. For example, if you are sure you can ride a horse than your self-efficacy for horseback riding is high. You have ridden before successfully, you are a quick study, you are comfortable in your own body, and you see this as a challenge.

Behavior Modification – if you fall off your diet, you may tap into your fear of failure, which overrides your confidence to continue, so you give up quickly when the going gets rough. Past dieting performance, your can do attitude, and how quickly you bounce back from disappointments influence your enacting change.

You overcome the fear of falling off the horse, or the diet, by getting back on. Action is the confidence builder.

Tools:

Sit and Reach test

The Sit and Reach test measures flexibility in your lower back and hamstrings. With 85% of adults experiencing lower back discomfort, flexibility can play a big part. Check it out.

Key Exercise Guidelines for Adults from the

American College of Sports Medicine

All adults should avoid inactivity. Some physical activity is better than none, and adults who participate in any amount of physical activity gain some health benefits.

For substantial health benefits, adults should do at least 30 minutes (five times a week of moderate-intensity, or 75 minutes (1 hour and 15 minutes) three to four times a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity, or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous intensity aerobic activity. Aerobic activity should be performed in episodes of at least 10 minutes and should engage all major muscle groups in a rhythmic way.

For additional and more extensive health benefits, adults should increase their aerobic physical activity to 300 minutes (5 hours) a week of moderate intensity, or 150 minutes a week of vigorous intensity aerobic physical activity, or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity activity. Additional health benefits are gained by engaging in physical activity beyond this amount.

Adults should also do muscle-strengthening activities that are moderate or high intensity and involve all major muscle groups on 2 or more days a week, as these activities provide additional health benefits. Do eight to 10 strength- training exercises, eight to 12 repetitions of each exercise. This can be accomplished by using dumbbells, resistance bands or your own body weight. If you are unsure how to perform the exercises correctly, seek the advice of an exercise professional.