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Exercise... Why bother? **Ten rules to get fit**

1. The minimum recommended level of strenuous physical exercise is 40 – 60 minutes three times a week for adults, and seven times a week for children and teenagers. Recommended exercises include a brisk walk, jogging, cycling, swimming, aerobics, rowing, football, P.E. etc.
2. Exercise that gets your heart beating fast and your breathing rate up continuously for 40 to 60 minutes is far better than exercise that encourages you to stop and start a lot, such as gardening, bowling etc.
3. You are more likely to keep up your exercise programme if you do activities that you enjoy, such as football, a brisk walk or a jog with a friend, etc. Outdoor exercise is more refreshing if the weather allows.
4. A good rule of thumb is you should spend as much time exercising as you do in front of a screen (e.g. the total time spent at the cinema, watching tv, on the internet, and playing computer or video games). For example, children should spend not more than seven hours a week in front of a screen and should spend at least seven hours a week doing physical exercise.
5. If you are beginning an exercise programme, start gradually and build up slowly. For instance, start with a brisk walk for 20 minutes three times a week for the first week. Increase the time walking by five or ten minutes every week until you reach 40 to 60 minutes of brisk walking three times a week. If you are trying to lose weight, you need to exercise for 60 minutes five to seven times a week.
6. Remember to stretch all your muscles for three to five minutes before and after exercise. Stretching makes your exercise regime more effective and helps prevent injury.

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7. Wear suitable clothing; e.g. good runners and a tracksuit. Have waterproof clothing available so that bad weather doesn't stop you from getting out exercising. If you are exercising at night, wear a reflective vest and bring a torch (be safe/be seen).
8. Drink plenty of isotonic fluids before, during and after exercise; e.g. Lucozade Sport, Energiser Sport, or make up your own isotonic drink by mixing pure fruit juice and water in equal amounts.
9. There are many physical benefits to regular physical exercise:
 - Increased muscle strength
 - Reduced weight, especially if combined with a sensible eating programme, such as Weight Watchers.
 - Reduced blood pressure
 - Reduced cholesterol levels
 - Reduced heart rate
 - Reduced back pain
10. There are many mental benefits to regular physical exercise:
 - Increased concentration at work, school and for exams
 - Increased mood – physical exercise releases endorphins, which can result in a “runner's high”.
 - Increased desire for sex and enhanced sexual performance
 - Better sleep patterns – exercise increases the body demand for sleep
 - Reduces stress
 - Reduces depression and anxiety
 - Reduces cravings, e.g. for cigarettes, alcohol, caffeine or sugar.

If there was a drug that could do all of this, everyone would be on it. However, regular physical exercise costs nothing and is free of side effects.

So, get up off the couch and get out exercising. I guarantee you will feel better no matter what age you are or your state of health.

See “you tube” video:

“ 23 and ½ hours: what is the single best thing we can do for our health”