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Nutrition and physical activity

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Abstract

The importance of physical fitness cannot be emphasized enough. In today's society that is moving towards a more sedentary lifestyle, there is a greater need than ever to increase the daily activity level to maintain both cardiovascular fitness and body weight. Eating a balanced diet and being physically active are two of the most important things you can do to be and stay healthy at any age. Physical activity is any form of movement that uses energy. People of all shapes and sizes and abilities can benefit from being physically active. Some physical activity is better than none and the more you do the more benefits you gain.

Keywords: Nutrition, physical activity, exercise

Introduction

Benefits of Physical Fitness

Staying active means keeping your body functioning at a high level. Regular exercise will maintain the performance of your lungs and heart to most efficiently burn off excess calories and keep your weight under control. Exercise will also improve muscle strength, increase joint flexibility and improve endurance.

Another main benefit of physical activity is that it decreases the risk of heart disease, the leading cause of death in America. Additionally, it can decrease your risk of stroke, colon cancer, diabetes and high blood pressure. Regular exercise has been long associated with a fewer visits to the doctor, hospitalization and medication.

Exercising does not have to be something boring and dreaded. It can be something that you enjoy that helps to increase the overall happiness in your life, as well as relieve symptoms of stress, depression and anxiety. Try to find some activities that give you pleasure, or even a buddy to do them with so that exercise is a fun and enjoyable activity (and one that you continue on a regular basis because it adds something good to your life).



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What Activities Are Beneficial?

It is not what you are doing, as much as it is whether or not you are doing something. Any type of moderate activity like walking, swimming, biking or organized sports can contribute to your physical fitness. Explore your fitness options at your local gym, community center or community college for courses and organized activities that may suit your lifestyle and interests.

To get the most benefit, you should begin by warming up for 5 to 10 minutes to increase your blood flow and prepare your body for activity. Follow the warm up with several minutes of stretches to increase your flexibility and lower your risk for injury. Complete your selected exercise or activity for 20 to 30 minutes and conclude the workout with 5 to 10 minutes of cool down and stretching.



Fig 1: Piramid Fizikal Aktiviti

Who Needs Physical Fitness?

Everyone! It is important for all people to stay active throughout their lives. Because of busy work and home lives, more than 60% of Americans do not get the recommended amount of physical fitness daily and these numbers generally increase with age. Throughout adulthood is one of the most important times to maintain an exercise regimen. This is the ideal time to maintain your weight, build strong bones and prevent many chronic health problems like high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes. Many adults do too much exercise at once. After a long work-week, many people try to fit lots of activity into the weekend and push their bodies excessively. This sudden increase in activity can raise the risk of injury which would then stop activity for weeks. Experts recommend working out several times over the course of a

week with varying exercises for the most benefit to your health.

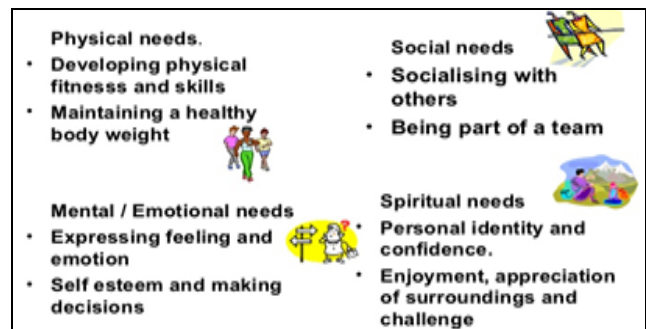


Fig 2: Benefits of participating in physical activity why people participate in physical activity

Activity is for Everyone

Virtually everyone can get health benefits from activity. But every few years, surveys confirm the well-known fact that most people aren't active enough. Unfortunately, we pay for it. The American Heart Association attributes about 250,000 deaths a year in the US - about 12 percent of total deaths - to lack of regular physical activity.

The reasons for inactivity aren't hard to figure out. Most of us have jobs where we sit most of the time, so chances are limited to be physically active at work. We also rely heavily on modern, labor-saving devices - cars, appliances, and power tools - to spare us manual effort.

But there's another reason why many people, especially the overweight, avoid activity. Check out the firm, supple bodies shown exercising on television or on magazine covers. They give the impression that exercise is sweaty, strenuous work best reserved for the young, super-fit, and athletic. But the latest research is proving that picture false: Benefits can be gained even from low-intensity activity, like gardening.



Activity and Weight Management

If you burn more calories than you consume, then you'll shed pounds. For every extra 3,500 calories you spend, you'll drop one pound. Do strenuous exercise, and you'll burn calories in a hurry. And you can burn the same number of calories with gentler activity: You just have to do it longer and/or more often.

If you're not familiar with the number of calories burned during exercise, you may be discouraged when you first learn about it. For instance, if you weigh 150 pounds and go on a brisk, 1-mile walk for 20 minutes, you'll expend about 100 calories, considerably short of the 3,500 calories needed to drop a pound.

But such efforts add up. If you expend an extra 300 calories a day through activity and reduce your dietary intake another 200 calories, then by the end of a week, you'll have a calorie deficit of 3,500, comparable to a one-pound weight loss. This is precisely the kind of gradual success that experts recommend for long-term weight management.



Conclusion

Exercise also has other body-slimming effects. It builds muscle and displaces fat. A given volume of muscle weighs more than the same bulk of fat. So your bathroom scale may not record dramatic changes, but your clothes will be looser, and you'll have a trimmer body shape.

Because exercise builds muscle, it may also help counter a problem caused by dieting. When you reduce calories, your body metabolism may slack off and burn calories more slowly. This makes further weight loss more difficult. But some research suggests regular activity helps correct this slowdown and makes it easier to keep.

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