



International Journal of Physical Education, Sports and Health

P-ISSN: 2394-1685
E-ISSN: 2394-1693
Impact Factor (ISRA): 5.38
IJPESH 2019; 6(5): 243-246
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www.kheljournal.com
Received: 10-07-2019
Accepted: 14-08-2019

Dr. Sanjay Choudhary
Assistant Professor,
Department of Physical
Education, Satyawati College,
University of Delhi, Phase III,
Ashok Vihar, Delhi, India

Physical fitness for women

Dr. Sanjay Choudhary

Abstract

Physical fitness is a measure of the body's ability to function efficiently and effectively in work and leisure activities, resist hypo kinetic diseases (diseases from sedentary lifestyles), and to meet emergency situations.

Women of all ages benefit from a moderate physical exercises daily. Walking for 30 Min to Hour or Jogging from 15 min to 30 Min. Women with health problems such heart disease, diabetes, obesity, blood pressure etc.

Keywords: Physical, fitness, Physical activity, heart, pressure

Introduction

Physical fitness is a vital component of overall health and well-being, encompassing both general fitness and specific fitness. General fitness refers to the state of health and well-being, while specific fitness pertains to task-oriented abilities related to sports or occupations. Achieving physical fitness is crucial for the body's optimal functioning in various activities, resisting diseases caused by sedentary lifestyles, and responding effectively to emergency situations.

Maintaining physical fitness involves ensuring that the body is physically sound and healthy, accompanied by mental stability. Regular physical exercise plays a key role in achieving and maintaining physical fitness. It contributes to:

1. **Healthy Weight:** Physical activity helps in maintaining a healthy weight by burning calories and promoting fat loss.
2. **Bone Density:** Exercise aids in building and maintaining healthy bone density, reducing the risk of osteoporosis and bone fractures.
3. **Muscle Strength:** Regular exercise strengthens muscles, enhancing overall strength and endurance.
4. **Joint Mobility:** Physical activity promotes joint mobility, flexibility, and range of motion, reducing the risk of joint stiffness and injuries.
5. **Physiological Well-being:** Exercise positively impacts physiological functions, including cardiovascular health, blood circulation, and hormonal balance.
6. **Reduced Surgical Risks:** Maintaining physical fitness can reduce the risks associated with surgical procedures by improving overall health and enhancing recovery.
7. **Strengthened Immune System:** Regular physical activity strengthens the immune system, reducing the susceptibility to illnesses and infections.

In summary, physical fitness is essential for maintaining optimal health, preventing diseases, and enhancing overall quality of life. Regular exercise plays a central role in achieving and sustaining physical fitness, supporting both physical and mental well-being.

Discussion

Physical fitness is a vital aspect of overall health and well-being for women. Regular physical activity offers numerous benefits, including improved cardiovascular health, stronger muscles and bones, better mental health, and enhanced quality of life. Despite these benefits, many women face unique challenges that can make maintaining physical fitness more difficult. This essay explores the importance of physical fitness for women, the specific benefits it offers,

Corresponding Author:
Dr. Sanjay Choudhary
Assistant Professor,
Department of Physical
Education, Satyawati College,
University of Delhi, Phase III,
Ashok Vihar, Delhi, India

common barriers women encounter, and strategies to overcome these barriers to lead an active and healthy lifestyle.

Importance of Physical Fitness for Women

Physical fitness is essential for maintaining overall health and preventing various chronic diseases. For women, regular exercise and physical activity are crucial for several reasons:

Cardiovascular Health: Cardiovascular disease is a leading cause of death among women. Regular physical activity helps improve heart health by reducing blood pressure, improving cholesterol levels, and increasing overall cardiovascular endurance. Women who engage in regular exercise are less likely to develop heart disease and stroke.

Bone Health: Women are at a higher risk of developing osteoporosis, especially after menopause. Weight-bearing exercises, such as walking, running, and resistance training, help maintain bone density and strength, reducing the risk of fractures and osteoporosis.

Weight Management: Physical activity is a key component of weight management. It helps burn calories, build muscle, and boost metabolism. Maintaining a healthy weight is important for reducing the risk of various health issues, including type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and certain cancers.

Mental Health: Exercise has been shown to have a positive impact on mental health by reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety, improving mood, and boosting self-esteem. Physical activity stimulates the release of endorphins, the body's natural mood lifters.

Hormonal Balance: Regular exercise can help balance hormones, which is particularly beneficial for women. It can alleviate symptoms of premenstrual syndrome (PMS) and menopause, such as mood swings, fatigue, and hot flashes.

Overall Well-being: Physical fitness contributes to a higher quality of life by increasing energy levels, improving sleep, and enhancing overall physical and mental well-being.

Benefits of Physical Fitness for Women

The benefits of physical fitness for women extend beyond the prevention of chronic diseases. Regular exercise and an active lifestyle contribute to a holistic sense of well-being.

Enhanced Physical Strength and Stamina: Engaging in regular physical activity helps women build muscle strength and endurance. This is particularly important for daily activities, such as lifting, carrying, and maintaining posture. Improved strength and stamina also contribute to better athletic performance and reduced risk of injury.

Improved Flexibility and Balance: Activities such as yoga, Pilates, and stretching exercises improve flexibility and balance, reducing the risk of falls and enhancing overall mobility. These benefits are particularly important as women age, helping to maintain independence and prevent injuries.

Better Body Composition: Exercise helps reduce body fat and increase lean muscle mass, leading to a healthier body composition. This not only enhances physical appearance but also reduces the risk of obesity-related health issues.

Stress Reduction: Physical activity is a natural stress reliever. Exercise helps reduce the levels of stress hormones,

such as cortisol, and promotes relaxation. Activities like running, swimming, and yoga are particularly effective in reducing stress and promoting mental clarity.

Social Connections

Participating in group fitness classes, sports, or outdoor activities provides opportunities for social interaction and community building. Social connections are important for mental health and can provide motivation and support for maintaining an active lifestyle.

Common Barriers to Physical Fitness for Women

Despite the numerous benefits, many women face barriers to maintaining regular physical activity. Understanding these barriers is the first step in overcoming them.

Time Constraints: Balancing work, family, and personal responsibilities can leave little time for exercise. Many women find it challenging to prioritize physical activity amidst their busy schedules.

Societal and Cultural Expectations: Societal norms and cultural expectations can impact women's participation in physical activities. In some cultures, women may face restrictions on their movement or the types of activities they can engage in.

Lack of Access: Limited access to safe and affordable exercise facilities, such as gyms, parks, and recreational centers, can be a significant barrier. Women in low-income communities may particularly struggle with this issue.

Health Issues: Chronic health conditions, injuries, or physical limitations can make exercise difficult or painful. Women with conditions such as arthritis, chronic pain, or obesity may find it challenging to engage in physical activity.

Self-Consciousness: Many women feel self-conscious about their bodies and may avoid exercise due to fear of judgment or embarrassment. This can be particularly true in public or mixed-gender environments.

Lack of Motivation and Knowledge: A lack of motivation or knowledge about effective exercise routines and fitness strategies can hinder women's participation in physical activity. Without clear guidance, it can be difficult to know where to start or how to progress.

Strategies to Overcome Barriers

While the barriers to physical fitness for women are real, there are strategies that can help overcome them and promote an active lifestyle.

Scheduling and Prioritization: Finding time for exercise requires deliberate scheduling and prioritization. Women can incorporate physical activity into their daily routines by scheduling workouts like appointments, combining exercise with other activities, or involving family members in active play.

Creating a Supportive Environment: Encouraging family, friends, and communities to support women's fitness goals can make a significant difference. Joining fitness groups or finding a workout buddy can provide motivation and accountability.

Access to Resources: Ensuring access to affordable and safe exercise facilities is crucial. Communities and policymakers can work together to provide accessible parks, recreational centers, and subsidized gym memberships.

Inclusive Fitness Programs: Fitness programs should be inclusive and accommodating of different abilities and fitness levels. Offering modifications, low-impact options, and specialized classes can make exercise more accessible to women with health issues or physical limitations.

Body Positivity and Confidence: Promoting body positivity and creating a welcoming environment in fitness spaces can help women feel more comfortable and confident. Encouraging women to focus on the health benefits of exercise rather than appearance can shift the emphasis to overall well-being.

Education and Guidance: Providing education on the importance of physical fitness and offering guidance on effective exercise routines can empower women to take charge of their fitness. Personal trainers, fitness apps, and online resources can provide valuable support and information.

Types of Exercise for Women

There are various types of exercise that women can engage in to achieve physical fitness. A balanced fitness routine should include a mix of cardiovascular exercise, strength training, flexibility, and balance exercises.

Cardiovascular Exercise: Activities such as walking, running, cycling, swimming, and dancing increase heart rate and improve cardiovascular health. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity cardio per week.

Strength Training: Strength training exercises, such as weight lifting, resistance band workouts, and bodyweight exercises, help build muscle and bone strength. Include strength training exercises at least two days per week, targeting all major muscle groups.

Flexibility Exercises: Stretching, yoga, and Pilates improve flexibility and range of motion. Incorporate flexibility exercises into your routine several times per week to enhance mobility and prevent injuries.

Balance Exercises: Balance exercises, such as standing on one leg, tai chi, and certain yoga poses, improve stability and reduce the risk of falls. These exercises are particularly important for older women. Regular physical exercise is highly beneficial for women of all ages. Engaging in moderate exercises such as walking for 30 minutes to an hour or jogging for 15 to 30 minutes daily can have numerous positive effects on health. However, it's essential for women with pre-existing health conditions like heart disease, diabetes, obesity, or high blood pressure to consult a physician before starting any exercise regimen.

In India, unfortunately, more than 90% of women do not participate in physical activity. This lack of engagement is often attributed to social factors such as limited support from family, friends, and religious constraints.

The benefits of regular exercise are manifold. It significantly increases life expectancy and improves overall health.

Regular physical activity reduces the risk of various chronic diseases including cancer, heart disease, and osteoporosis. Additionally, it enhances cardiorespiratory and muscular fitness, boosts metabolism aiding in weight management, and helps alleviate stress, anxiety, and depression, thereby improving mood.

Moreover, physical activity contributes to maintaining brain function in older adults, aids digestion, promotes regular bowel movements, and increases bone density. It also helps individuals age gracefully by preserving their looks and agility. Additionally, exercise improves sleep quality and enhances overall quality of life.

In summary, incorporating regular physical exercise into daily routines is essential for women to maintain optimal health, prevent chronic diseases, and improve overall well-being.

Benefits of Physical Training

Reduced Risk of Chronic Diseases: Physical training can lower the risk of coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, colon cancer, and diabetes.

Weight Management: It helps in weight control by building lean muscle and reducing body fat.

Joint Health: Physical training can help regulate joint swelling and alleviate pain associated with conditions like arthritis.

Psychological Well-being: Regular exercise can improve mood, reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, contributing to overall psychological well-being.

- 1. Personality Development:** Physical training contributes to the development of a wholesome personality in women, promoting confidence and self-esteem.
- 2. Healthcare:** It fosters a culture of healthcare by encouraging regular physical activity, leading to better overall health and wellness.

Suggestions for Improving Fitness among Women

- 1. Incorporate Walking:** Encourage walking for routine activities like shopping for household groceries.
- 2. Regular Walks:** Schedule daily walks of 30 minutes to 1 hour in the morning or evening.
- 3. Household Chores:** Engage in domestic tasks like cleaning the house, which can also contribute to physical activity.
- 4. Gardening:** Planting and caring for a garden at home can provide physical exercise and stress relief.
- 5. Play with Kids:** Participate in active play with children to increase physical activity levels.
- 6. Stationary Cycling:** Use stationary bikes at home for cardiovascular exercise.
- 7. Mobility and Stretching:** Incorporate mobility and stretching exercises into daily routines for flexibility and joint health.
- 8. Yoga or Dance:** Attend yoga classes or dance sessions for a fun way to stay active and improve flexibility.
- 9. Gym Membership:** Join a nearby gym for access to equipment like treadmills for running and strength training.
- 10. Stair Climbing:** Utilize stairs for physical activity, especially if living in apartment buildings.

Suggestions for Organizations to Improve Fitness among Women:

1. **Create Accessible Spaces:** Provide parks, playgrounds, walking paths, and cycling areas near residential areas.
2. **Community Clubs:** Establish community clubs for recreation and organize neighborhood groups to engage in physical activities.
3. **Promote Physical Events:** Organize sports tournaments, running events, and walking campaigns to encourage moderate physical activity participation among women.

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