

# *your* Health



## **Exercise – You have to move it to lose it**

*There are no magic bullets to losing weight. But exercise is the closest thing.*

There are three major goals of exercise. The first is to increase aerobic capacity. The second is to gain strength and the third is to gain flexibility.

Aerobics includes running, walking, biking, etc. – any exercise that increases oxygen uptake over a prolonged period of time and improves endurance.

Strength training is important, especially for women, as it helps to build bone mass. A recent study reported in *Prevention* magazine suggests elastic band work-outs are the most successful for strength training. It takes little equipment and can be done anywhere.

Lifting weights is always a solid option as well. When you think of lifting weights, massive equipment may come to mind. But, there are many effective exercises you can do with a few free weights.

Flexibility is critical as well, especially as we age. It helps with balance and fluid movement.

In order to improve the quality of life as you age, you must include all three into your exercise plan.

You don't need to become an Olympic athlete to get results, and you don't have to do all three every day. You also should be realistic in your outcomes with each.

You do, however, have to commit to making this an important part of your life. Start with a goal of 30 minutes of activity. If you can do more, that's great, but the goal is

*Yoga includes physical exercise, but the main goals of the yoga lifestyle are training your mind, body, and breath, as well as connecting with your spirituality.*

to work your way to more minutes over time. Choose your exercise – walking, running, biking, swimming, using the elliptical, etc.

Track weight and body fat only once a week or even once a month. As fitness improves, reevaluate time, level of exercise, and your weight-lifting program.

Remember: Moderation, Consistency, Duration-lifestyle, Nutrition – all of which are crucial.

**Pilates is a balanced blend of strength and flexibility training that improves posture, reduces stress, and creates long, lean muscles without bulking up.**

Exercise can be time-consuming with today's hectic schedules. You must determine just how much time you can spend on it. It has to be a priority, with the understanding that sometimes unexpected events can get in the way. But get right back to it as soon as you can!

If possible, exercise in the morning. No matter how busy your day gets, you'll feel good that you've done it. Or try walking during your lunch hour. If you have a treadmill or an elliptical, set it up in a room with a view and listen to music. Use the pre-programmed features, if available, to help you.

See an example below of an effective week of exercise that incorporates all three critical aspects to a great exercise plan. If you have more time on weekends, adjust the plan and take a day off during the week.

When possible, walk outdoors or hike as a treadmill substitute, remembering that pace is critical. Inside, the treadmill paces you. Outside, if you walk too slowly, you won't get the training effect or caloric impact.

If you need help getting motivated, there are many fitness centers, some open 24 hours, where you can begin a strength-training routine. There are a wide variety of DVDs available to help you get started without leaving home. Elastic band work-outs are a good option, as are free weights.

Pilates is great for flexibility. There are also DVDs available that include Pilates and some very basic yoga techniques. And you can even take them on the road with you when you travel. Basic stretching is all that's needed. You want to increase your flexibility as well as improve balance.

There are many ways to exercise – for your health and for your weight. Do what keeps you motivated – Pilates, yoga, tai chi, basic stretching. Engage your spouse and your children to exercise with you. It's a healthier way to spend quality time with your family than sitting in front of the television. Just do something that will keep you moving.

Remember, you have to move it to lose it!

**Tai chi, sometimes called tai chi chuan, is a noncompetitive, self-paced system of gentle physical exercise and stretching.**

DAY	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Aerobic	30 min.	30 min.	30 min.	30 min.		45 min.	Rest or relaxing walk
Strength	20 min.		20 min.		20 min.		
Flexibility Stretching		15 min.		15 min.	15 min.		

*In the next issue we will discuss how proper eating habits aid in controlling or losing weight. For more information, visit the Health and Wellness page at [www.royalneighbors.org](http://www.royalneighbors.org).*