

Health Benefits of Exercise and Physical Activity:

- Reduce the risk of premature death
- Reduce the risk of developing and/or dying from heart disease
- Reduce high blood pressure or the risk of developing high blood pressure
- Reduce high cholesterol or the risk of developing high cholesterol
- Reduce the risk of developing colon cancer and breast cancer
- Reduce the risk of developing diabetes
- Reduce or maintain body weight or body fat
- Build and maintain healthy muscles, bones, and joints
- Reduce depression and anxiety
- Improve psychological well-being
- Enhanced work, recreation, and sport performance

What is Aerobic Exercise?

The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) defines aerobic exercise as "any activity that uses large muscle groups, can be maintained continuously, and is rhythmic in nature." It is a type of exercise that overloads the heart and lungs and causes them to work harder than at rest. The important idea behind aerobic exercise today, is to get up and get moving!! There are more activities than ever to choose from, whether it is a new activity or an old one. Find something you enjoy doing that keeps your heart rate elevated for a continuous time period and get moving to a healthier life.



Regular exercise and physical activity are extremely important and beneficial for long-term health and well-being. For a comprehensive resource, see "[Physical Activity and Health: A Report of the Surgeon General.](#)"

Benefits of Aerobic Exercise:

- Increased maximal oxygen consumption (VO₂max)
- Improvement in cardiovascular/cardio respiratory function (heart and lungs)
 - Increased maximal cardiac output (amount of blood pumped every minute)
 - Increased maximal stroke volume (amount of blood pumped with each beat)

- Increased blood volume and ability to carry oxygen
 - Reduced workload on the heart (myocardial oxygen consumption) for any given sub maximal exercise intensity
 - Increased blood supply to muscles and ability to use oxygen
 - Lower heart rate and blood pressure at any level of sub maximal exercise
 - Increased threshold for lactic acid accumulation
 - Lower resting systolic and diastolic blood pressure in people with high blood pressure
 - Increased HDL Cholesterol (the good cholesterol)
 - Decreased blood triglycerides
 - Reduced body fat and improved weight control
 - Improved glucose tolerance and reduced insulin resistance
-

Benefits of Strength Training:

- Increased muscular strength
- Increased strength of tendons and ligaments
- Potentially improves flexibility (range of motion of joints)
- Reduced body fat and increased lean body mass (muscle mass)
- Potentially decreases resting systolic and diastolic blood pressure
- Positive changes in blood cholesterol
- Improved glucose tolerance and insulin sensitivity
- Improved strength, balance, and functional ability in older adults



Links to Other Health Organizations

[The American Cancer Society](#)
[The American Heart Association](#)
[The American Diabetes Association](#)
[National Institutes of Health](#)

References:

Georgia State University. (2011). The exercise and physical fitness page. Retrieved June 10, 2011 from <http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwfit/benefits.html>.