

Move it or lose it: the importance of physical fitness

An active lifestyle is central to overall health.

Physical fitness is as important as any health measure you may take to improve your well-being and longevity.

People who are physically fit are generally healthier, have less difficulty maintaining their optimum weight, and are far less at risk for a host of health problems. Regular exercise and overall fitness also relaxes the mind and eases tension, allowing you to better face the routine challenges of life and deal more effectively with changes or problems.

There are countless benefits to an active lifestyle, some of which may surprise you. For starters, exercise is a natural mood lifter that relieves stress, anxiety, depression, and anger.¹ Most people simply feel better over time as they make physical activity a regular part of their lives.

An active lifestyle also helps make your body function better. If you don't move your body consistently over time, you lose strength, stamina, and flexibility. Exercise helps build your strength and endurance, which helps with all other physical activities.

Most importantly, sustained, consistent physical activity generally can reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke. Being more active can also help you:

- lower your blood pressure
- boost your levels of good cholesterol
- improve blood flow
- keep your weight under control
- prevent bone loss that can lead to osteoporosis
- increase your overall energy levels

How can I become more physically fit?

You don't have to be a "gym rat" to become physically fit. Overall health and wellness is certainly about more than vigorous exercise, but that is an important starting point. To get fit, you need to commit to regular physical activity, proper nutrition, and adequate rest.² Avoiding bad habits (junk food, smoking, too much alcohol) and getting outdoors more often will also get your blood circulating and your mood improved.

Your doctor can advise you on how to get started on the fitness journey. In fact, the more you do to get stronger and fitter, the happier your personal physician is likely to be. And for any questions or concerns about your health and fitness, your Best Doctors benefits can be invaluable in clarifying or expanding your knowledge on health and wellness in general, with straightforward, comprehensive information on your diagnosis.

¹<https://healthyforgood.heart.org/move-more/articles/why-is-physical-activity-so-important-for-health-and-wellbeing>

²<https://fitnesshealth.co/blogs/fitness/understanding-the-importance-of-physical-fitness>

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