

Fitness and Medical Problems

1. What is Physical Fitness

In its most general meaning, physical fitness is a general state of good physical health. It can be most easily understood by examining its components, or parts.

TASK

Match the components with their definitions:

Cardiovascular Endurance

The ability of a muscle to sustain repeated contractions or to continue applying force against a fixed object

Muscular Strength

The ability to move joints and use muscles through their full range of motion

Muscular Endurance

The ability to deliver oxygen and nutrients to tissues and to remove wastes over sustained periods of time

Flexibility

The makeup of the body in terms of lean mass (muscle, bone, vital tissue and organs) and fat mass

Body Composition

The ability of a muscle to exert force for a brief period of time

2. Benefits of Exercise

The benefits of exercise are far-reaching. Clinical and epidemiological studies have demonstrated that regular aerobic exercise reduces the risk of death due to heart disease and stroke, aids in reducing weight, helps prevent diabetes mellitus, strengthens bones, and enhances immune function. The psychological benefits are also broad, and most studies suggest a positive relationship between physical fitness and mental achievement.

TASK

Complete the text using the first two letters of the word.

To summarise, regular exercise improves blood ci....., prevents and manages high blood pr....., keeps we..... under control and improves your st..... and flexibility. Furthermore, physical activity improves your self-im....., as well as the ability to sleep well, manage st..... and tension.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the difference between physical activity and exercise?
2. How much physical activity does a person need?
3. What is considered moderate physical activity?

3. Illness and Exercise

Physical activity is good for our bodies in many ways. However, there are times when illness makes some type of exercise difficult or unwise. On the other hand, there are specific exercises that can be used to help with particular conditions.

TASK

Read the following advice and decide whom it concerns.

- people suffering from: **heart disease, asthma, arthritis, back pain**

1. Exercise can offer many benefits to you, including a better range of movement, increased muscle strength and an increased sense of wellbeing. There may be times when resting your joints is more appropriate, though – perhaps when they are inflamed and painful during an acute attack.
2. Bed rest is no longer recommended as an active treatment of this condition. Instead, you should continue with your ordinary daily activity, gradually increasing your physical activity over a period of days. Avoid heavy lifting and vigorous sports, such as squash or tennis, that involve a lot of spinal movement. As ever, swimming and walking are the best all-round exercises.
3. Start gradually if you are not used to regular exercise. Make sure you have a snack or drink of water when you need it, as becoming dehydrated will make you feel worse. If at any point you feel pain in your chest, arms or neck, stop exercising and rest. You must be careful about the exercise you take, especially aerobic exercise. Overdoing it will put a strain on the damaged tissue and could bring on angina.
4. Swimming is probably the best choice for you or anyone who suffers bronchospasm, for several reasons: the exercise results in toning of upper body muscles, which aids respiration. Moreover, the horizontal position may help to move mucus from the bottom of the lungs, helping to reduce airway congestion.

TASK

Write down some advice about exercising for people with other medical problems. Let the others guess what condition you have in mind.