



## Exercise supplements healthy diet

With the thousands of nutrient and herbal supplement choices we now have, the closest thing to a “cure-all” might be called Supplement E-x. If it could be put in a pill, it would be the most frequently prescribed medication in the world. What is this wonder remedy? It is regular exercise.

Exercise can take many forms – walking, climbing stairs, some forms of housework, gardening, recreational sports, or working out in a gym. In the past, a great deal of physical activity occurred with our daily work or chores. Today, however, more effort is needed to incorporate activity into our sedentary lifestyles.

So what’s so great about exercise? Here is a brief summary of some of the major benefits.

1. The most obvious benefit of physical activity is weight control. Compared to being a couch potato, walking can triple the calories we “burn.”

2. Research conducted over 40 years ago by Dr. Jean Mayer indicated that low to moderate levels of regular physical activity seem to “normalize” the appetite.

3. Regular activity causes biochemical changes in our bodies that increase the use of fat as fuel.

4. Supplement E-x reduces the risk of coronary heart disease by promoting overall heart health. This is

demonstrated by beneficial changes in blood pressure and HDL (“good”) cholesterol.

5. As people get older, many people develop a type of diabetes typically called noninsulin dependent diabetes. This is especially common in Hawaii. The body’s cells do not respond normally to the insulin they produce. The result is an increase in blood sugar. This is sometimes referred to as insulin resistance since the cells are “resisting” the usual effects of insulin. Regular, moderate-intensity physical activity, and the increased fitness that results, makes the body’s cells more sensitive to insulin. Treating this type of diabetes with exercise can reduce and sometimes remove the need for medications. It is always important for diabetics to work closely with their doctors when changing their level of physical activity.

6. Another health problem that develops with age is osteoporosis. This condition is a thinning and weakening of the bones. Although the causes of osteoporosis are multiple and complex, exercise is clearly one important element of prevention. An extremely sedentary lifestyle increases bone loss. “Weight-bearing” exercises prevent bone loss. These activities include walking, running, gardening, lifting weights, but not swimming. Bones work by the old adage “Use it or lose it.”

7. Exercise helps us to maintain muscle strength. This becomes more important with age.

8. A number of studies have shown that regular physical activity helps to boost immune functions. This may decrease the incidence of catching a cold or the flu. This research also indicates that excessive exercise can depress immune function.

9. Exercise increases chemicals in the body called endorphins. Research indicates that these internal chemicals can promote an overall feeling of euphoria, thereby decreasing depression. Self-image may improve.

10. Research also shows that regular exercise helps people sleep more soundly.

How much physical activity is necessary to provide these benefits? Even moderate amounts can make a difference. As a minimum, 30 minutes a day of moderate intensity activity can benefit health. More is even better.

Exercise may not be the foundation of youth, but it is the closest thing we’ve found. Remember, if you haven’t exercised in a long time, start slow. As with all supplements, you can overdose on Supplement E-x.

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