

Fitness: Exercise is best medicine for many ailments

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Most adults do not meet the recommended amount of at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity each week. What is the reason for this? The typical response will vary but will usually include the following: I don't have time, I am not motivated, I don't know how to, I can't afford a gym membership. None of these are actual valid reasons for not exercising but rather are excuses.

According to the World Health Organization's most recent Global Health Risks data (2004) after high blood pressure, tobacco use and high blood glucose, lack of physical activity constitutes the

fourth leading cause of death worldwide.

When the average person becomes ill she/he will visit their doctor in the hope of finding a cure for what ails them. More often than not their doctor will prescribe them some type of pharmaceutical medication in the hope that this will remedy the problem. The problem with this method of "treatment" is many of these medications do not cure the problem but rather mask the problem. In addition many pharmaceutical medications come with a host of negative side effects which may include the following: itching, rash, dry mouth, drowsiness, elevated heart rate, nausea, and thoughts of suicide.

What if there was one simple prescription that could lower the risk of premature mortality, improve quality of life, and does not come with any of the negative side effects that most prescription medications do? That prescription is readily available at no cost. What is this magic pill? Exercise!

Regular physical activity can achieve the following: lower the risk of colon cancer by over 60 percent, reduce the risk of Alzheimer's disease by approximately 40 percent, reduce the risk of heart disease and high blood pressure by approximately 40 percent, lower the risk of stroke by 27 percent, lower the risk of developing type 2 diabetes by 58 percent, decrease depression and anxiety symptoms as effectively as medication, and much more.

In 2007, the American Medical Association and the American College of Sports Medicine put in motion the Exercise is Medicine initiative. The objective of this program is to further promote the scientifically proven health benefits of exercise. This program calls for doctors to discuss their patients' exercise habits in all of their interactions. If these patients are not meeting the recommended amount of physical activity they will be made aware of the required recommendation and/or be referred to a fitness professional who can assist them in attaining their health related goals.

Exercise is a free "pill" that can be taken anywhere at any time! It has tremendous upside with very few negative side effects. I encourage all of you take your daily dose today and begin reaping the benefits of this wonder drug.

References

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