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Healthy, Lifelong Activities

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Introduction

Being physically active on a daily or regular basis is one of the most important health considerations or decisions you can make. According to the Mayo Clinic, engaging in regular moderately strenuous physical activity can have far-reaching effects when it comes to your health, including an improved ability to control your weight, combat various health conditions and diseases, elevate your mood, boost your energy levels, and improve your sleep.[1] The Centers for Disease Control, or CDC, adds that regular physical activity can enhance your ability to perform your daily activities and decrease your likelihood of falling (if you are an older adult), and it can improve your longevity, too.[2]

The key to being physically active throughout your lifespan is to find the activities through which you derive the most enjoyment and satisfaction, physical fitness, or social health benefits. Your chiropractor can recommend healthy, lifelong activities - activities you can perform at any age - based on your aptitudes, interests, and your current state of musculoskeletal health.

Meet with your chiropractor before beginning an exercise regimen to discuss your plan and to learn how you can get the maximum health benefits out of your activities. Listed here are several healthy, lifelong activities that almost anybody can perform.

Walking

Walking is a weight-bearing activity that may improve your longevity, help you manage your weight, lower your blood pressure, and reduce your chances of developing type 2 diabetes. Regular bouts of physical activity, such as walking, can help you prevent premature death and the following chronic diseases, notes a 2006 study published in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*: cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, hypertension, obesity, depression, and osteoporosis.[3] This same study notes that you may experience protection from cardio-vascular-related death with as little as 1 hour of walking per week.

QUESTION:
Which of the following is a martial art?

A) Yoga
B) Tai Chi
C) Feng Shui

ANSWER:
B) Tai Chi

TRUE OR FALSE:
A medical report indicates cardiovascular benefit from as little as ½ hour walking per week

ANSWER:
1 hour per week

QUESTION:
Which activity may improve joint function for people with arthritis?

A) Walking
B) Cycling
C) Swimming

ANSWER:
C) Swimming

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Cycling

Cycling, either on or off-road, is a fun activity that can be performed in groups for added enjoyment (and safety). Cycling builds strength, improves muscle tone, and enhances your cardiovascular health and endurance. A 2012 study published in the journal *Environmental Health Perspectives* states that the health benefits associated with cycling far surpass cycling-related risks, such as increased exposure to air pollution and traffic accidents.[4] Consider commuting to work by bicycle, if possible, to improve your health and to support the health of the environment.

Swimming

Swimming is a low-impact aerobic activity that can be performed all year and by almost everyone. According to the CDC, water-based exercise, including swimming, is beneficial for people who have chronic diseases, and it may improve joint function without worsening symptoms in people with arthritis, including individuals with rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis.[5] The CDC adds that water-based exercise can improve your mood, decrease fibromyalgia-related anxiety, improve the quality of life in older individuals, and improve or maintain the bone health of post-menopausal women.

Yoga

Yoga is an important activity for building strength, maintaining musculoskeletal health, and developing excellent posture, and it can be performed by people of all ages. Yoga may help you reduce stress, lose weight, improve your balance, flexibility, strength, and range of motion, and manage a variety of health problems, including depression, anxiety, and insomnia. According to a 2010 study published in the *Journal of Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, yoga may be as effective as or better than other, more conventional forms of exercise at improving various health outcome measures.[6]

Tai Chi

Tai chi is a beautiful Chinese martial art that promotes strength and relaxation. Tai chi is a type of meditative movement, and it is popular among people of all ages, especially older individuals, who perform tai chi to improve longevity. Tai chi practitioners may experience the following health benefits, notes the Mayo Clinic: decreased anxiety and depression, improved balance and flexibility, heightened sleep quality, increased endurance and agility, lower blood pressure, and elevated cardiovascular fitness.[7] Many people who try this movement art for the first time are surprised to discover its challenging physical nature.

Chiropractic care can help support your musculoskeletal health and allow you to pursue your preferred physical activities pain-free well into advanced age. Regular visits with your chiropractor ensure long-term joint health - an important consideration both for active individuals and those who desire to become more active.

Quote to Inspire

"To enjoy the glow of good health, you must exercise"

Gene Tunney

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