Physical activities to prevent heart diseases

Pandemic has changed many people’s way of life to a sedentary lifestyle. Well, are you one of them with the practice of a lot of sitting and lying down with very little or no exercise? A large percentage of the people are physically inactive with fewer than 10% engaging in recreational physical activity.

Exercise has beneficial effects on weight control and several other important cardiovascular risk factors. A number of studies have shown a strong inverse relationship between leisure time activity, energy expenditure, habitual exercise, and the risk of coronary disease and death.

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Regular exercise has a positive effect on many of the established risk factors for cardiovascular disease. For example, exercise bolsters weight reduction and can help lower blood pressure. Exercise can reduce “bad” cholesterol levels in the blood as well as total cholesterol, and can raise the “good” cholesterol.

Scientific Reasoning

Regular walking appears to be beneficial in older men. This was illustrated in a report from the Honolulu Heart Program of 707 retired nonsmoking men (mean age 69) who were capable of participating in a low-intensity activity on a daily basis. The distance walked was measured at baseline and mortality data, then collected over a 12-year period. After adjustment for age, men who walked more than two miles per day (range two to eight miles [3.2 to 12.8 km]) had a significantly lower mortality rate than those who walked less than one mile (1.6 km) per day, 23.8 versus 40.5 percent, risk factor adjusted relative risk.

Virtually identical findings were noted in a review of over 70,000 postmenopausal women in the Women’s Health Initiative Observational Study in which prolonged sitting predicted an increase in cardiovascular risk. Sedentary women who became active in mid-life or later had a lower incidence of coronary events compared with those who remained inactive.

The positive effects of exercise have been proved in a variety of additional research areas. The Women’s Health Study states, healthy women also benefit from light to moderate exercise; the benefit is again related to the duration of the exercise.

There is a lot of research showing that mortality declines when physical activity increases or body fitness improves. The Nurses Health Study articulates, sedentary women who became

active in mid-life or later had a lower incidence of cardiovascular disease, compared with those who remained inactive.

European Society of Cardiology recommends physical activity for primary prevention of Cardiovascular Disease (CVD). Healthy adults of all ages should perform at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity or an equivalent combination. For additional benefit, a gradual increase to 300 minutes a week of moderate-intensity or 150 min a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity or an equivalent combination is recommended. Multiple sessions of physical activity should be considered each lasting 10 minutes, preferably every day of the week

Exercise Prescription

Aerobic exercise is a general term, often referred to as endurance training, and includes any activity that develops cardiovascular and pulmonary fitness. It is an important component of an exercise prescription with an abundance of evidence supporting its benefits for health. It can include activities like brisk walking, swimming, running, or cycling. You probably know it as "cardio."

Strength exercises provide important health benefits beyond aerobic activity. Also referred to as strength training can be performed using body resistance training, weight resistance (eg, push-ups), free weights (eg, barbell squats) that place loads on muscles forcing them to work harder. The best programs emphasize multi-joint exercises such as the squat, deadlift, and press that involve all the major muscle groups.

Strength training is typically done two or three days per week

Mobility exercises are important for maintaining functional capacity. Particularly among older adults, mobility is important for performing activities of daily living and avoiding falls. If stretching exercises are performed to increase muscle flexibility, it is usually best to do so after aerobic or strength workouts when muscles are warm.

Example: Yoga

How to train your body to exercise on daily basis:

F – Frequency: Number of days per week (ideally three or more)
I – Intensity: Moderate or greater
T – Time: Number of minutes per session (ideally 30 minutes or longer)
T -Type: Activities that involve major muscle groups

FITT prescription for the non-sedentary beginning exerciser

Frequency: Three days per week
Intensity: Moderate

Time: 20-30 min
Type: Brisk walking

Physical inactivity is associated with at least a twofold increase in the risk of coronary events. Heart disease is a leading cause of death, but it’s not imminent. To lessen your risk, be active throughout the day. Try to exercise for an average of 30 minutes. Decide to do this at least 3-4 times a week. Exercises like brisk walking, jogging, bicycling, and swimming are the best. Now let’s stop blaming the pandemic and get ready to gear up for a healthy lifestyle.

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