

# Fitness First

## 29 BENEFITS OF BEING FIT

### NERVOUS SYSTEM:

1. Stress, anxiety, boredom, frustration, and simple depression are reduced. Exercise is a natural tranquilizer and stress reducer.
2. Sleep is sounder.

### BRAIN:

3. Concentration and alertness are improved.

### SKIN:

4. Fitness promotes a healthier, more vibrant complexion.

### BONES:

5. Bones are stronger and less brittle.

### MUSCLES:

6. Fit muscles have better tone, strength, and endurance — reducing the chances for injury.
7. Muscles can work harder, with less fatigue.
8. Posture and overall appearance are improved.

### HEART:

9. A fit heart works more efficiently and with less strain.
10. A fit heart beats fewer times per minute while at rest than an unfit heart.
11. A fit heart can meet *extra* demands with ease.

### BLOOD VESSELS:

12. Blood circulation to all parts of the body is improved.
13. The blood flows through the blood vessels more easily.
14. Blood pressure is normally lower, and strain on the circulatory system is not as great.
15. The tendency to develop atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries) is reduced.

### DIGESTIVE SYSTEM:

16. Digestion and waste removal are improved.
17. Appetite is controlled.

### BLOOD:

18. Increased circulation can deliver more oxygen to the cells.
19. The blood can remove more waste products from the cells.
20. Blood chemistry is improved so the risks of heart attack and stroke are reduced.
21. "Bad" cholesterol (LDL) can be lowered; "good" (HDL) can rise.

### LUNGS:

22. Lungs can process more oxygen with each breath.
23. Extra demands for oxygen (e.g., running for a bus) can be met without "winding" you.

### JOINTS:

24. Joints are more flexible — allowing greater ease and range of movement, and making them less prone to injury.

### MORALE:

25. Self-image and sense of well-being are improved.
26. You'll feel more in control and more satisfied with your life.

### EXTRAS:

27. You'll miss less work.
28. You'll be less likely to smoke, drink heavily, or use drugs.
29. You'll lower your risk for certain types of cancer, osteoporosis, diabetes, and heart disease.



## 9 ways to bring exercise into your life

1. **Walk to more places** — to the store, to a friend's house — even (at least part way) to work.
2. **"Steal" some time after work** and before dinner for some brisk, aerobic exercise.
3. **Make your exercise an imaginary trip.** Figure the miles "covered," and record them daily.
4. **Make exercise a daily habit** — like brushing your teeth.
5. **Exercise before lunch.** It can help you curb your appetite, work through the morning's tensions, and refresh you to meet the afternoon's demands.
6. **Get active indoors.** Dust, vacuum, scrub, sweep, mop, etc.
7. **Go for an after-dinner walk** rather than watch television.
8. **Take the stairs** rather than the elevator whenever possible.
9. **Mow the lawn with a push mower,** rake leaves, and work in the garden.

## Exercise... HOW MUCH? HOW LONG?

**Q** How much exercise is enough? Do I have to exercise every day, or is three times a week enough? Is more better?

**A** To be "FIT to a T," use the following guidelines:

### Frequency =

most days of the week.

### Intensity =

at a level where you feel slightly short of breath, without gasping (you can still talk with an exercise partner).

Increases in intensity of exercise should be very gradual.

### Time =

30 to 60 minutes.

The best time to exercise is *before* a meal (not after).

### Type =

whatever type of exercise you enjoy and can do regularly (e.g., brisk walking, jogging, cycling, swimming, aerobics classes).

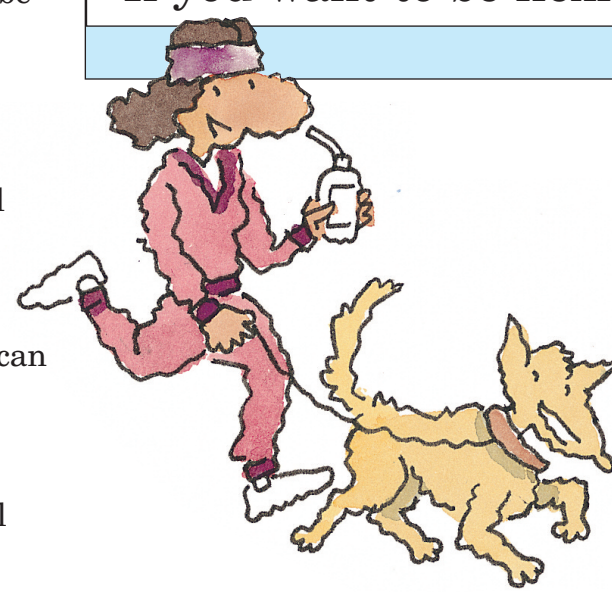
Exercising *less* than these guidelines will produce some benefit, but not enough.

Exercising *more* may be useful for athletic training, but it has diminishing returns in terms of cardiovascular fitness. It also may lead to musculoskeletal injury.

Results from an exercise program are slow — but sure — and take six weeks or more from the start to show benefit.

Exercise should become as much of a habit as eating and sleeping — and should be an *equal* commitment.

	FITNESS CLASSES	BASKETBALL	CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING	CYCLING (INDOOR)	CYCLING (OUTDOOR)	HANDBALL/RACQUETBALL	JOGGING	ROPE SKIPPING	ROWING (INDOOR)	SKATING (ALL TYPES)	SOCCER	SWIMMING (INDOOR/LAP)	TENNIS (SINGLES)	WALKING	YOGA/STRETCHING
If you're out of shape	•			•	•				•	•		•		•	•
If you're in great shape	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
If you want to be alone				•	•		•	•	•	•		•		•	•
If you like company	•	•	•			•	•			•	•		•	•	
If you hate to sweat												•		•	•
If you love the indoors	•	•		•		•		•	•			•			•
If you have joint problems				•	•							•		•	•
If you don't have much time				•			•	•	•						
If you're easily bored	•	•	•			•				•	•		•		
If you're competitive		•			•	•	•			•	•	•	•		
If you can't spend much		•						•			•			•	•
If you want to be flexible		•	•			•				•		•	•	•	•



## WEATHER TIPS

### When it's hot:

1. **Drink at least a cup of fluid** (water's best) before — and every 20 minutes during — your exercise routine.
2. **Exercise during cooler** (early or late) and/or less humid parts of the day.
3. **Wear a minimum of light,** loose-fitting clothing. Cover your head. Wear a water-soaked towel or handkerchief around your neck.
4. **Exercise less than normal** for a week until you have adapted to the heat.

5. **If it's really hot** and humid, exercise indoors. Watch for signs of heat stroke — feeling dizzy, weak, confused, lightheaded, and/or excessively tired; sweating stops, and/or body temperature becomes dangerously high.

### When it's cold:

1. **Wear layers of clothing** you can peel off as you warm up. Wear one less layer than when you're not exercising.
2. **Use mittens** or cotton socks to protect your hands.
3. **Wear a hat,** since about half of your body's heat is lost from your neck and head.
4. **Don't risk injury.** If it's snowy or icy, exercise indoors.
5. **Asthmatics are at risk** for an exercise-induced asthma attack (EIA), triggered by cold air.