

EXERCISE PRESCRIPTION

There are many people out there who have a desire to begin exercising. Some do not begin because they do not know where to start. This article will provide some guidelines about what types of exercises are important and how long they should be performed to be most effective. Safety issues are also discussed in this article.

There are two main types of exercises that should be performed on a regular basis. The first type of exercise is commonly called aerobic (also referred to as cardiovascular or endurance) exercise. The second type of exercise is strength / weight training.

Aerobic (cardiovascular / endurance) exercise received its name because the body uses the heart, lungs, and blood vessels to deliver oxygen to the working muscles. Also, a cardiovascular activity can be performed continuously without stopping for long periods of time. The guidelines¹ given by the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) for performing aerobic exercise are as follows:

- **Exercise 3 – 5 days each week**
- **Warm up for 5 – 10 minutes before aerobic activity**
- **Maintain your exercise intensity for 30-45 minutes**
- **Gradually decrease the intensity of your workout, then stretch to cool down during the last 5-10 minutes**
- **If weight loss is a major goal, then aim to participate in your activity for at least 30 minutes for 5 days each week.**

Strength / weight training exercises are important in building strong bones and muscles. This is beneficial in that it causes the body to lay down more bone, preventing / slowing bone loss. It also increases muscle mass, increasing the body's metabolism, which can aid in regulating body weight. Listed below are the general guidelines for strength training given by the American College of Sports Medicine²:

1 - **Make a Commitment**

- exercise will take some time and effort
 - Expect to strength train 20-45 min two or three times each week

- You may be a little sore for the first week, but it will pass. Start slow.

2 - Get a Good Resource

- Use the LifeQuest staff (Susan or Gary)
- We can help you learn eight to ten exercises to strengthen all major muscle groups

3 - The Routine

- 8 -12 repetitions (repetition = one complete "lift and relax" cycle) for each exercise. 1 to 3 sets of 8-12 repetitions.
- If you cannot do at least eight repetitions - the weight you are lifting is too heavy. Try a lighter weight.
- Breathe once for each repetition; exhale as you exert. Always move the weight slowly.
- Rest briefly between sets or do an exercise with a different muscle group.

4 - Progression

- If you exceed 15 repetitions the weight is too light; gradually increase your weight.
- Dumbbells and cuff weights are right for some people. But it is recommended that you use our standard selectorized equipment before trying free weights.
- At first, you will be increasing the weight every week or so as your body becomes more coordinated.

5 - Rest and Grow

- Do **NOT** do strengthening exercise routines on two consecutive days
- Rest at least one day between strength workouts to give your muscles a chance to recuperate.
- Research shows the biggest improvements are in the first few months – due to increased coordination.

Exercising Safely²

1 - Most people can and should exercise!! However, LifeQuest strongly recommends that you talk to your always doctor before beginning an exercise routine.

- Who should **NOT** exercise
 - ✓ anyone with an unstable medical condition should get their doctor's OK first
 - ✓ injury may require waiting for healing -- listen to your body and your doctor
 - ✓ if you have cardiac, pulmonary, or metabolic disease you may exercise, but only after seeing your doctor and then starting in a supervised environment

2 - Getting Started

- start slowly in moderation:
 - Endurance exercise: simply walk a little further than you normally do and progress to walking further and faster as the weeks and months pass. Talk to your doctor and the LifeQuest staff about a progression that is right for you.
 - Strength exercise: lift a weight that you are used to lifting, but do it more times than you normally do and gradually progress to lifting the weight 12 times.

3 - Listening to Your Body

- You should always be able to catch your breath and speak comfortably while exercising.
- You should sense effort, but never pain.
- Learn to use the Rating of Perceived Exertion Scale (see the *NIA Guidelines)
- Always remember to warm up (start slowly- 5 min) and cool down (stop gradually- 5 min)

**Start your program slowly, and please ask questions.
After learning to exercise safely you will wonder why you waited so long to start!**

References

1. <http://www.acsm.org/pdf/Guidelines.pdf>
2. <http://www.acsm.org/health+fitness/activeaging.htm>