



Principle #3 Exercise

*“God designed that the living machinery should be in daily activity. For in this activity or motion is its preserving power.... The more we exercise, the better will be the circulation of the blood.”—Ellen G. White, *Healthful Living**

It's no surprise that exercise makes the list of Adventist health principles. Exercise is wonderful and it does amazing things for the body, but there are some ways to exercise that are better than others!

What is Exercise?

The official definition of exercise is *“activity requiring physical effort, carried out specially to sustain or improve health and fitness”*. Exercise should consist of a mixture of stretching, cardiovascular activity, and strength training. Stretching increases your range of motion throughout every muscle group in your body. Cardiovascular activity, which includes running, swimming, and cycling, works out your

heart and lungs. With heart attacks rampant and on the rise, working out your heart and lungs is extremely important! Strength training is also important as it allows you to build muscle mass and strengthen your core. Not only can it improve posture, but it can prevent injuries from occurring.

Benefits of Exercising

The main benefits of exercise are included in the list below:

- Living a longer and healthier life.
- Protection from heart disease.
- Protection from certain cancers such as endometrial, lung, breast and colon cancer.
- Protection from diabetes.
- Protection from osteoporosis.
- Increases cognitive function.
- Increases positive feelings and mood.
- Helps to prevent obesity.
- Improves the function of the muscles, joints, lungs and heart.
- Improves sleep while reducing stress.

Wow, those sound great right?! But, what about the individual types of exercise, what do they do?

Stretching

Brings nutrients to the joints and contributes to bone and joint health. Being flexible also reduces your chances of injuries to your joints and muscles and improves coordination. If you're getting older (which we all are) your muscles will lose their elasticity. So, it's important to stretch in order to maintain the range of motion in your joints.

Cardiovascular Activity

Aerobic activity is important because it strengthens your heart and lungs. Physiologically speaking, your lungs bring oxygen into your body where it ends up in your bloodstream. Then, your heart pumps that blood throughout your entire body. Cardiovascular activity is awesome because it works both of these organs making it easier for your lungs to disburse oxygen through your tissue into the bloodstream as well as dispose of harmful carbon dioxide. Your heart on the other hand, doesn't just get more efficient, it grows stronger and has an easier time sending the correct amount of oxygen throughout your body with ease. Because of this, those who do aerobic activity will also reduce their risk of heart attack, high cholesterol, blood pressure issues, and diabetes. Besides all the wonderful heart-health effects of cardio, it also releases serotonin, which makes you feel good and helps to reduce symptoms of depression. It helps you to sleep better at night and reduces your overall stress.

Strength Training

Strength training helps you become stronger and more fit, while revving up your metabolism. Building muscle helps to protect your bones, which is great for those who are prone to osteoporosis. More muscle equates to more calories being burned, which is wonderful for those who are trying to lose or maintain weight. Strength training can also reduce and eliminate symptoms of depression, back pain, arthritis, obesity, osteoporosis, and diabetes.

How to Start

Before starting any activity, it is important to check with your doctor to verify that you're healthy enough to proceed with your exercise plans! The most effective way to start exercising is to set reasonable goals based on your current fitness levels. If you are currently sedentary, your goal may

be to stretch in the morning for five minutes and walk for fifteen minutes during your lunch break. If you are already exercising, then you should figure out what you're missing in your routine. Are you taking the time to stretch? Have you neglected weight training out of fear of becoming "bulky"? Re-evaluate these issues and set goals to start incorporating all three types of exercise into your routine. Whatever you decide to do, make it fun! If you don't like what you're doing, you won't stick with it!

How Often?

Stretching

Minimum of 5-10 minutes a day or 15-20 minutes a day, three days a week for a total of around 60 minutes a week. Going under three days a week is not as effective and you won't get the full benefits of your stretch training.

Cardiovascular

Twenty minutes of vigorous exercise three times a week, or thirty minutes of moderate cardio five days a week.

Note: It is important to make sure you don't overdo it! Before starting your cardio, you should make sure you know your target range for your pulse and check it during your workout to make sure you aren't pushing too hard. A heart monitor is a great tool for this!

Strength Training

With strength training you want to work out somewhere between three and four times a week and no more than two days back to back. You should try to train each muscle group at least once a week. The most important rule though, is that you should have at least one day of rest from your exercise routine! This gives your body time to recover.

EXERCISE RESOURCES

Great Articles on Exercise <https://lifeandhealth.org/fitness>

Office Exercises Standing video <https://www.adventistlearningcommunity.com/resources/5344>

Office Exercises Sitting video <https://www.adventistlearningcommunity.com/resources/5342>