

Keeping Fit and Active

Why Exercise?

Humans have always exercised. In historical times, people would exercise by hunting, skinning animals, or by preparing for battles. Life was much harder then, and this meant our ancestors had to do more exercise than we do today. They would build their own homes and find their own water. Even though we don't need to hunt and fight anymore we do still need to exercise! The Ancient Greeks realised the importance of exercise and wrote books on the subject that they called, 'Gymnastics' which means to exercise - naked! As staying healthy is so important we need to find a way to exercise in the modern world even with busy lifestyles.

How Much Exercise?

Doctors recommend that to stay healthy adults should be exercising with a raised heart rate for thirty minutes, three to five times a week. They recommend that children exercise with a raised heart rate for an hour everyday. This means that adults should play a sport, like football, or netball for half an hour, five times in one week. Children should do one of these activities for an hour a day. As people exercise more, they become fitter, and it takes more and more to raise their heart rate. So, did you do the right amount of exercise last week?!

Different Types of Exercise

There are different types of exercise that are all just as good for the body. There is exercise that raises your heart rate, like running, cycling and tennis. This is called cardio vascular exercise. There are also exercises that give muscles extra strength, like lifting weights, doing sit ups or strength training. There are also exercises based on stretching that make your body more flexible, like aerobics and yoga. Whilst these are all beneficial, cardio vascular exercise is considered the most important. So when exercising five times a week, it is important to remember that there are plenty of options to choose from.

There are even more ways to keep active and stay fit doing day to day activities! Walking up the stairs instead of going on the escalator or walking to the shops instead of driving are options that make people fitter and more healthy. Other outdoor activities such as gardening, or doing a paper round, or walking a dog, are other great ways to get active and stay fit.

Effects on the Body

Exercise causes the heart to pump blood around the body faster. This delivers oxygen to our muscles, bones and organs more quickly – and keeps us healthy. It causes our lungs to work more quickly and means that the body actually grows new blood vessels to deliver the blood to the muscles more quickly. Regular exercise can improve sleep, mood and skin. When we exercise our brain also begins to grow new brain cells, and releases hormones called serotonin and dopamine. These are chemicals that make us feel happy and relaxed. As a result of all of this increased blood flow, exercise can help fight off diseases and helps prevent illnesses such as Osteoporosis (having weak bones when you get older).

The body is amazing, and knows exactly what to do when we start exercising so our muscles can get the oxygen they need to work faster we breathe more quickly. Because our bodies begin working harder when we exercise, they begin producing sweat. This sweat then evaporates, keeping our body cool. This is the body's way of making sure it never overheats. It also means that after we have finished exercising it is very important that we drink a lot of water so that our body can recover the water it has lost. It is also important to eat a well balanced diet so that you have enough energy for exercise.

Megan Dunsby

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1. How many times do we need to exercise a week to stay fit and healthy? (AF2)
2. Which of these doesn't count as exercise? (AF3)
 - a. swimming
 - b. tennis
 - c. walking
 - d. cooking
3. Why is it important to drink water after exercising? (AF2)
4. Write down how much exercise you did last week. Do you think it was enough? (AF3)
5. Other than exercise, can you think of one other way we can stay fit and healthy? (AF7)
6. Can you think of two adjectives to describe how you feel while exercising? (AF5)
7. How do you feel about exercising after reading this passage? Why? (AF3)
8. Why do you think the author has used subtitles in the text? (AF4)
9. Do you think this text is written to...? (AF6)
 - a. entertain
 - b. inform
 - c. advertise

10. Match these words with their meaning. (AF2)

active lifestyle	exercise that raises the speed that heart pumps blood
Osteoporosis	a Greek word for exercising
evaporates	a disease that causes weak bones in older people
yoga	a suggestion that is believed to be good for you
gymnastics	a lifestyle where someone has to do lots of physical activity
cardio vascular exercise	an ancient exercise based on stretching and strengthening muscles
recommended	the act of liquid heating up and becoming a gas

11. Design an exercise schedule for someone for one week, making sure they get the correct amount of exercise. The first day is done for you. Ensure a variety of at least three different types of exercise. (AF2/AF7)

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Swimming (30 mins.)						