

## **Fitness Tips for Teens**

Going back to school not only means exercising your mind but if you participate in organized sports, it will mean starting practice with your coaches to become better at your game. This can be a lot of fun especially when you are physically fit. Why should you be concerned about fitness? Because by becoming fit, you will perform better in your game as well as the classroom.

What if you are not in organized sports? You still can become fit by exercising regularly and watching what you eat. If you eat too much and exercise too little, this can lead to overweight and related health problems that can follow a teen into their adult years. As a teenager, you can take an active role in learning healthy eating and physical activity habits now.

### **How will healthy eating and physical activity help?**

A balanced diet and being physically active will help you to grow. You grow quickly during your teen years. No matter how short or tall you are, your bones are winning the growing race- the long bones (legs and arms) keep getting longer, and your muscles may have a difficult time keeping up. You may have to help your muscles by stretching them and keeping them flexible.

Did you know that healthy behaviors, like nutritious eating and regular physical activity, may help you meet the challenges of your life? In fact, healthy eating and regular exercise may help you feel energized, learn better, and stay alert in class. These healthy habits may also lower your risk for diseases such as diabetes, asthma, heart disease, and some forms of cancer.

Make it a goal to be physically active all days of the week. Experts suggest at least 60 minutes of moderate physical activity daily for most children. Walking fast, bicycling, jumping rope, dancing fast, and playing basketball are all good ways to be active. Realize that if you spend more time watching TV and playing computer and video games, you are probably spending less time being active.

### **How to Stay Fit**

Look for chances to move more and eat better at home, at school, and in the community. It is not easy to maintain a healthy weight in today's environment. Fast food restaurants on every corner, vending machines at schools, and not enough safe places for

physical activity can make it difficult to eat healthy and be active. Busy schedules may also keep families from fixing and eating dinners together. Understanding your home, school, and community is an important step in changing your eating and activity habits.

Stay positive and focused by remembering why you wanted to be healthier--to look, feel, move, and learn better. Accept relapses--if you fail at one of your nutrition or physical activity goals one day, do not give up. Just try again the next day. Also, share this information with your family. They can support you in adopting healthier behaviors.

Email me at Deborah.Holmes @phystherapy .com for further information on Teen Fitness.