

Exercise is a Healthy Solution

The lack of enough physical activity has become a serious problem in modern times, especially in industrialized lands. The modern worker may sit in front of a computer most of the day, drive his car everywhere he needs to go, and spend the evening in front of the television, computer or video game. There are risks for inactivity which could include high blood pressure, a higher risk of strokes and heart attacks, a higher risk of developing certain types of cancers, a higher risk of osteoporosis and a higher tendency to become obese.

Are you getting enough exercise?

Physical activity actually requires movement of your legs and arms at least 30 minutes three to five times a week. This could be in the form of an exercise, recreational sport or a vigorous activity. Pick an activity or exercise that you enjoy doing such as walking, bicycling or swimming. Many people hesitate to engage in regular physical activities for fear of getting hurt or sick. Your Physical Therapist will recommend specific strengthening, stretching, balance and coordination exercises to meet your particular needs after a careful assessment to identify any movement impairment. The American Physical Therapy Association recommends a yearly visit with a Physical Therapist to promote optimal health, wellness, and fitness, as well as to slow the progression of impairments, functional limitations, and disabilities.

What is functional exercise?

What we do in everyday life can improve our physical condition. We can simply increase the frequency of everyday activities that require moderate levels of exertion. You can climb stairs instead of taking the elevator or ride the elevator to a floor short of your destination and then take the stairs the rest of the way. If you use public transportation, get off a few stops early, and walk the rest of the way. Choose a parking space further from your destination. Many tasks around the house require exertion such as cleaning or gardening. If you are working in a sedentary job, don't allow yourself to sit long periods of time before getting up and moving about.

A good fitness program not only involves prescribed weight lifting to strengthen the muscles and increase bone density but it must also include stretching. Stretching increases the range of motion of a joint and flexibility of the surrounding soft tissue. However, to avoid injury, and for proper technique, both weight training and stretching must be done properly. Both activities are instructed in physical therapy sessions. The bottom line is that our bodies are designed to move around and engage in regular physical activity. When our muscles are put to use through exercise, this makes it a lot easier to rebound from accidents or illnesses that may limit our mobility for a period of time. A sedentary life-style can affect the quality of your life now and in later years. Once you begin to enjoy the health benefits of exercise, you may actually look forward to your sessions of physical activity.