

Help your heart, increase flexibility, build strength

Hanford Environmental Health Foundation staff

When most people think about fitness, the first question they usually ask is, "Where do I start?" Exercise can sometimes appear difficult, awkward and time-consuming. You can see how exercise can help you become fit if you look at the essential parts of fitness:

- cardiovascular health, which refers to the condition of a person's heart and blood vessels after aerobic conditioning
- flexibility, which is gained by increasing range of motion of the joints and muscles in the body
- strength, which comes from training the muscles
- endurance, gained over time from consistent fitness training.

The most successful exercise programs combine all these fitness essentials.

Aerobics and your heart

Exercises that strengthen the heart are called "aerobic" exercises. This type of exercise increases the heart's power and efficiency and improves the body's use of oxygen. Examples of aerobic exercises include brisk walking, running, bicycling and swimming. All these aerobic exercises should be performed for at least 20 to 30 minutes at a pace that is brisk but does not make you short of breath. Remember to include a five-minute warm-up and five-minute cool-down, too.

Stretching is important too

The most effective way to increase the body's flexibility is to do regular stretching exercises. This kind of exercise can improve the body's range of motion within a relatively short time. It feels good and may help you increase your strength. Remember to stretch slowly, without bouncing, holding each stretch for at least 20 seconds. Breathe normally during a stretch.

Building your strength

Muscle strength can be improved by forcing the muscles to work against increasing amounts of resistance. The most common methods of building muscle strength are lifting weights and using specially designed resistance machines. Be sure to warm up before doing any strengthening exercises. Work up to three sets of 10 repetitions each, resting between sets.

Fitness program

The key to fitness is to begin slowly and work gradually toward greater flexibility, strength and endurance. Try to schedule exercise at least three times a week for about 20 to 30 minutes each time and include a mix of the fitness essentials — aerobics, stretching and strength-building. Also remember to warm up for a few minutes before exercising and to cool down for a few minutes at the end of each workout.

If you have an existing medical condition or a family history of heart disease, check with your personal medical provider before beginning an exercise program. Take the first step toward a fitter, healthier body by incorporating these essentials into your life.

If you would like additional information on exercise or would like to schedule a presentation for your group, contact HEHF Health Education Services at 373-3720 or send an e-mail message to *HEHF Health Education Services. ■

Safety presentations

Fluor Hanford Safety and Hanford Environmental Health Foundation Health Education Services are teaming to present several "Make Your Move" presentations on understanding fitness and exercise. Attendance at one of these presentations will meet the April safety meeting attendance requirement for Fluor Hanford employees. For further information, call Carol Powe of Fluor Hanford Safety at 376-8886, or Judi Staley of HEHF Health Education Services at 372-0097. Fluor Hanford work groups that cannot attend the scheduled presentations may call HEHF Health Education Services at 373-3729 to schedule a more convenient time.

'Make your Move' schedule

- Tuesday, April 8, Federal Building, room 142, 10-11 a.m.
- Thursday, April 10, 2420 Stevens Center, room 153, 9-10 a.m.
- Wednesday, April 16, MO-293, 100K, 9:30-10:30 a.m.
- Thursday, April 17, MO-278, 200W, 9-10 a.m.
- Thursday, April 17, 2101-M, Bijou, 200E, 10:30-11:30 a.m.
- Monday, April 21, MO-250, 200W, 8-9 a.m.
- Wednesday, April 23, 3763, 300 Area, 9-10 a.m.
- Wednesday, April 23, 4706, 302, 400 Area, 10:30-11:30 a.m.