

Exercise and weight loss

Alternative Names

Tips for losing weight with exercise

Information

The key to weight control is balancing our energy (food) intake with how much energy our body burns (physical activity). To lose weight, you must burn more calories than you eat.

Exercise is a key way to do this. When you exercise regularly, you build stronger muscles. Muscles cells burn more calories than fat cells throughout the day, even while you are resting. This helps boost your metabolism.

How much exercise you need to make a difference in your weight depends on how much you eat and what activity you are doing. A medium-sized adult would have to walk more than 30 miles to burn up 3,500 calories, the equivalent of one pound of fat. Although that may seem like a lot, you don't have to walk the 30 miles all at once. Walking a mile a day for 30 days will achieve the same result, as long as you don't eat more than usual.

If you eat 100 calories a day more than your body needs, you will gain approximately 10 pounds in a year. You could lose the weight or keep it off by doing 30 minutes of moderate exercise daily. The combination of exercise and diet is the best way to control your weight.

AEROBIC EXERCISE

Aerobic exercise is exercise in which you are continuously moving a large muscle group such as in your arms legs and hips for a period of time. Your heart rate gets faster and your breathing becomes deeper and faster.

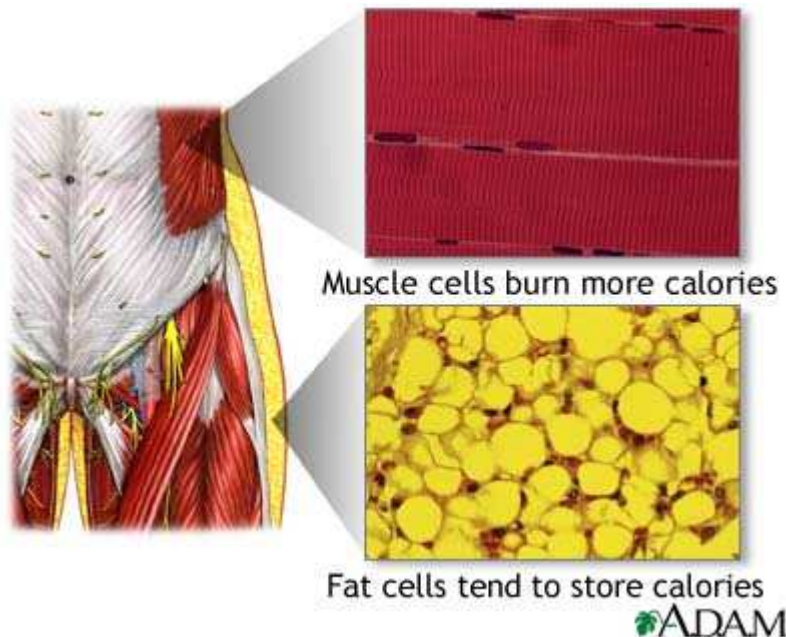
All adults should get 2 1/2 hours of aerobic exercise spread out over a week, but should be done for at least 10 minutes at a time.

If you have not been active, start slowly and build up over weeks or even months. Walking can be a good exercise to start with.

Every week increase the time you spend with the activity, do it more often or add a second activity. You can increase the speed of your activity or the difficulty of the activity, such as going up hills.

STRENGTHENING

All adults should do exercises to strengthen the muscles at least two days a week. These activities can include push-ups, situps, using resistance bands, or lifting weights. Make sure to do exercises that work on all the parts of your body.



If you are doing a regular program of strength training (weight lifting), your muscles will get bigger. It is possible that your overall weight will increase, because muscle weighs more than fat. However, your clothes will probably fit better and your body will be more toned. Your body composition is a better indicator of your overall health than the number on the scale.

If proper technique is followed, most people of any age can safely lift weights. It is important, however, to check with your doctor before you start to train with weights. Also, consult an experienced personal trainer or coach prior to beginning a weight lifting program. This can help prevent injuries and the loss of muscle strength and endurance that occurs with bed rest and inactivity.

Look for other activities house activities that improve strength or endurance, such as gardening.

Those recovering from heart attacks can benefit greatly from supervised cardiac rehabilitation programs.

See also: Body mass index

Making a Commitment

The decision to keep fit requires a lifelong commitment of time and effort. Exercising and eating right must become things that you do without question, like bathing and brushing your teeth. Unless you are convinced of the benefits, you will not succeed.

Patience is essential. Don't try to do too much too soon and don't quit before you have a chance to experience the rewards. You can't regain in a few days or weeks what you have lost in years of sedentary living, but you can get it back if you keep at it. And the prize is worth the price.

Health Benefits of Exercise

Regular exercise -- including walking -- decreases your risk of:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Heart attack
- High blood pressure
- Obesity
- Osteoporosis
- Some cancers
- Stroke

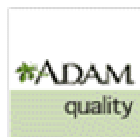
Exercise also improves good cholesterol (HDL) levels.

You should always check with your health care provider before you begin any new form of exercise.

References

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