



# IS EXERCISE EVEN MORE IMPORTANT THAN DIET?

WELLNESS TIPS



Most of us understand “exercise is important.” But when it’s time to actually exercise, all kinds of more important things pop up. Maybe it’s a late-running business meeting or call. Maybe it’s the next episode of our favorite Netflix series. The need to post photos of our cat or dinner. Or maybe we have to clip our nails. In other words, most of us find ways to do anything other than go exercise.

But the fact is, that Netflix serial you binge today can become unwanted pounds tomorrow. In fact [studies](#) verify that being sedentary and sitting too much can shorten our lifespan and make us sick. The human body is amazing, and as an organism it functions BEST when active. Physical activity keeps us young, pain-free and fit, while physical inactivity leads to deterioration: loss of bone density, stiff or achy joints, weak muscles, weak heart and lungs, and degeneration of cellular energy systems. Perhaps most important, [exercise prevents cellular aging by boosting mitochondria](#). While inactivity accelerates aging.

## TYPES OF EXERCISE

Exercise is officially grouped into four basic categories—endurance, strength, balance, and flexibility. Most people focus on one type and think they’re doing enough. However, each is important and together they keep your rockin’ bod a lean, mean performance machine. Much now is focused on Core Training, exercises that strengthen abdominal muscles, back muscles and muscles around the pelvis. Having a strong core is important to avoid back pain and injuries, and makes it easier to do everything else throughout the day.

Many exercises fit into multiple categories. Yoga, for example, is an extremely effective way to improve, strength, balance and flexibility all at once – nothing like multitasking! Many endurance activities also build strength; strength exercises improve balance. The one thing they all have in common is they are a win-win for our physical and mental health.

Endurance Exercise (aerobic exercise) increases and enhances breathing and heart rate. Building endurance keeps our heart, lungs, and circulatory system healthy. It makes everything we do easier and is a critical part of any anti-aging regimen. Examples include dancing, cycling, jogging, walking.

Strength Exercises (Resistance Training) strengthen muscles. Crucial for maintaining independence as we age, this can be as mundane as climbing stairs or carrying groceries, or as involved as a weight training program. Core training is a vital part of strength training.

Balance Exercises help prevent falls, and are crucial for older adults. Many lower-body strength exercises improve balance. So does yoga, Tai Chi or martial arts, dance, or just standing on one foot.

Flexibility Exercises stretch our muscles and help us stay limber and pain-free, because they are a critical part of maintaining joint health. Being flexible gives you the freedom of movement, not just for exercise, but for life. Yoga, classical stretch, pilates or simply bending down to touch your toes are all flexibility exercises.

## OVERALL PHYSICAL BENEFITS OF EXERCISE

Whew! Quite a list of exercise types there. Maybe it’s easier to just find something else to do, like clean out the junk drawer? Rest assured, you will be rewarded once you start exercising on a regular basis. And the more often you do exercise, the more it becomes a habit and just part of your daily routine. The physical benefits of regular exercise include:

- Reduces the risk of heart and cardiovascular disease
- Reduces the risk of diabetes and metabolic syndrome
- Reduces the risk of breast and colorectal cancer, and possibly some other cancers
- Strengthens bones and muscles, reducing risk of osteoporosis and joint issues
- Reduces inflammation in the body
- Improves overall physical ability to perform daily tasks and reduces risk of falls
- Increases your chance of living longer by boosting mitochondria and cellular health
- Benefits brain health by creating new brain cells

We suggest using a tracking app, like [MapMyRun](#), or even investing in a fitness tracker like [FitBit](#) to log your efforts and keep tabs on your results. This makes it easy for you to see progress over time, which will help keep you motivated. Even simply checking off the days on a calendar when you exercise will give you a visual record of your hard work, to help keep you going.

## EXERCISE BENEFITS MENTAL & EMOTIONAL HEALTH TOO

The benefits of exercise extend far beyond awesome 6-pack abs or being able to contort yourself into a yoga pretzel. Exercise has proven, and very important benefits for the brain.

Various studies have shown that [cardiovascular exercise actually creates new brain cells](#). This process is called [neurogenesis](#). It also improves overall brain performance, boosting memory in humans of all ages. This is because exercise increases the production of cells in the area of our brain called the hippocampus that’s responsible for learning, memory, and decision making.

Ever wondered why you feel good after exercise? That spring in your step has science behind it. Exercise causes the brain to release [dopamine](#) and endorphins that make us happy. It also increases concentrations of norepinephrine, a chemical that helps moderate our brain’s stress response. This is why people who suffer from depression or anxiety benefit so much from exercise. And of course, exercise helps us look better too, boosting self-confidence.

## HOW TO START AN EXERCISE PROGRAM

Beginning an exercise program doesn’t have to be a big deal, but it can have a big impact on improved health for the rest of your life. For example, new research finds that walking just 40 minutes several times per week can reduce the risk of heart failure in post-menopausal women by 25 percent. According to [2018 research](#), the minimum prescription to reap the health benefits of walking is walking 30 minutes per day, 5 days per week.

Anyone and everyone who can should walk. It’s also a good idea to support your body during your exercise ramp-up. This includes proper sleep, a healthy diet, and a healthy vitamin and [supplement](#) regimen. And remember, before starting any intensive exercise such as weight training, consult your doctor, a trainer or physical therapist if possible to avoid injury.

See you at the gym!

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