

In Good Health

Your Monthly Wellness Spotlight by PSA

Get Up and Go... Starting a Physical Fitness Program

Starting an exercise program is one of the best things you can do for your health, but it can be hard to know exactly where to start. In this month's In Good Health flyer, learn tips for how to implement a regular exercise program into your routine so you can live a healthy life!

How much exercise should you strive for?

There are many different types of exercise options, but it is important to choose one that you enjoy doing. The more you like your activity, the more you will want to do it.

Although everyone is different, the American Heart Association recommends that the average person should partake in at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical exercise, such as walking, most days of the week.

Tips to Get Started

When beginning an exercise program, do not become overwhelmed. All you need to do is develop a plan, set goals, and pace yourself. Here are some tips for how to get started:

- **Check your Heart Rate** - Check to see what your heart rate or pulse is before, during, and after your activity. You want to make sure that your heart rate is within "target range" which is around 50-70% of your maximum heart rate. To calculate your maximum heart rate, subtract your age from 220.
- **Determine your Exercise Schedule** - Write it down! Putting it on paper will help you to follow through. Start slow and build up.
- **Listen to your Body** - If you feel pain, shortness of breath, dizziness, or nausea, take a break. You may be pushing yourself too hard.
- **Be Flexible** - If you are not feeling well, give yourself permission to take a day or two off.

- **Understand your Fitness Level** - It is important to access your baseline fitness scores so you can manage your progress. To access your fitness, check the following:
 - Your pulse rate before and immediately after walking one mile.
 - How long does it take to walk the mile?
 - How many push-ups can you do?
 - How far can you reach to touch your toes?
 - What is your waist circumference?
 - What is your body mass index?
- **Monitor your Progress** - Every month, re-check the following listed in Understand your Fitness Level. You will be amazed at your progress.

If you lose motivation, set new goals or try a new activity. Having an exercise partner can also be beneficial so you will keep each other on track!

When to Contact Your Doctor

It is important to talk to your doctor before you start an exercise program if you have heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, cancer, or high blood pressure. When exercising, if you experience any of the following, contact your doctor:

- Chest, jaw, or arm pain
- Dizziness or fainting
- Shortness of breath
- Ankle Swelling
- Rapid Heartbeat

Bottom Line

If you are not sure about your health or have multiple medical problems, speak to your doctor before beginning a new exercise program. They can help you design a program that is right for you.