

Exercise is Important

Why exercise?

Your heart, like every other muscle, gets stronger with regular exercise. A strong heart doesn't have to work as hard to circulate the blood, because it pumps more efficiently. The right kind of exercise improves blood circulation, helps your heart, lungs, and other organs work together more efficiently, and improves fitness. And the more fit you are, the longer you can exercise vigorously without tiring.

Exercise is good for most people, but if you have any health problems, you and your parents should talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program.

What are good exercises?

Basically, there are two kinds of exercise, aerobic and anaerobic. Aerobic exercises are exercises, sports, and other activities that cause the body to use more oxygen. Swimming, running, and jumping rope are examples of aerobic exercises. Weight lifting, golf and baseball are anaerobic exercises. They're fun and help increase flexibility, but they don't really exercise the heart and lungs. Aerobic exercises are better for you because they make your heart stronger and build your endurance.

Benefits of aerobic exercise

- You can breathe easier because your chest muscles get stronger, which helps the air to flow in and out faster.
- Your heart gets stronger because it gets a good workout.
- Your blood flow, or circulation, gets better.
- Your muscles get "toned." They look and feel firmer and work better.
- You burn off excess calories, so they're not stored in your body as unnecessary fat.
- You have more energy, and you don't tire easily.
- You control your appetite and keep a healthy input/output balance.

What are characteristics of aerobic exercise?

- An aerobic exercise improves the condition of your heart and lungs.
- The key characteristics of heart-healthy aerobic exercises are:
 - They increase your heart and breathing rates.
 - They're done for 20 to 30 minutes without stopping.
 - They're done at least three times a week.

Why stretch before exercising?

- Stretching reduces the chance of joint injuries and muscle strains.
- Stretching improves your posture.
- Stretching relieves muscle soreness.
- Stretching improves physical performance.