

## **Exercise – The wonder drug**

Years ago, doctors rarely told people with chronic ailments to exercise because they were unsure of how much physical activity these people could handle. In the last decade, exercise has proved to be effective in helping people manage – and prevent – everything from heart disease to osteoporosis, diabetes and even cancer.

### **Do you exercise, or are you physical active?**

Being physical active is a wonderful lifestyle choice, but it is not the same as being an exerciser. Physical activity is any body movement that leads to increased energy expenditure, while exercise is planned, structured and repetitive body movement.

For instance, activities of daily living – stuff you have to any ways, like carrying the groceries – count as physical activity. To say you exercise means you might go for a brisk walk everyday during lunch, attend a weekly yoga class or enjoy a competitive game of ball every Friday.

### **A Prescription for Exercise**

When your doctor writes you a prescription for a drug it often comes in several different forms, a chewable tablet, a liquid suspension, etc. The dose of the drug also varies. It could be one large dose once a day or several smaller doses throughout the day.

Exercise is no different. There's a "dose-response" relationship between exercise and health. In effect, you or your trainer could write a "prescription" for exercise, at a tolerated intensity, with your own personal "dosing" schedule. Whatever you choose to do, remember - the only requirements are that your physical activity be planned, structured and repeatedly enjoyed.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity, every day, for five days per week. Or, you can swap that for 20 minutes of vigorous physical activity three days a week. This is a great "prescription" to start with, working up to one hour of daily moderate intensity activity.

### **Time well spent**

Increasingly, chronic diseases are costing us time and money. That's not news, but preventing disease by being physical activity is far less expensive than traditional medicine. Any time you spend enjoying yourself while being active, right now, means less time spent in convalescence, waiting for medical care when you are older.

And since you are already involved in Jumpstart Fitness, you are miles ahead, so keep going.