



"You have sprouts. It's something couch potatoes get after sitting for too long."

The Value of Exercise in Dealing with Covid 19

Exercise advice from the Valley Medical Group's Physical and Occupational Therapy Team

At a time when we need to protect ourselves by staying at home and practicing social distancing, how can we use physical activity to enhance and maintain our health?

... make up your own routine to music you enjoy that uses major muscle groups and raises your heart rate.....CDC Guidelines

What is physical Activity?

According to the World Health Organization “Physical activity includes all forms of active recreation, sports participation, cycling and walking as well as activities you do at work and around the home and garden. It doesn’t have to be exercises or sport – play. Dance, gardening, and even house cleaning and carrying heavy shopping are all part of being physically active.”

Set the timer on your phone or kitchen timer every 45 minutes to remind you to walk 2-3 minutes -Diane Gray, PT

It is important for people of all ages and abilities to move and be active. Walking, stretching, getting up from sitting and taking short walks, adding a few squats every time you stand up from a chair, all contribute to your well being.

The Benefits from Physical Activity

“Take care of your body, Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate. Try to eat healthy, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep...” CDC.gov, Advice on delaying with stress from the pandemic.

According to the *American Family Physician*, regular exercise maintains strength, decreases the risk of depression, and cognitive decline, and helps to maintain a healthy body weight. From the WHO, “Regular physical activity benefits both the body and the mind.” The list goes on. It can: reduce high blood pressure, reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and various cancers. Activity improves bone and muscle strength, increases balance, flexibility and fitness. For older adults it can help to prevent falls and injuries and in children it enhances healthy growth and development.

How much Physical Activity is Recommended?

.... Do some muscle strengthening activities such as lifting weights or improvise using full bottles of water or simply use your own body weight., make it fun, such as dancing to music.... WHO Guidelines

The American Heart Association recommends 150 minutes of moderate activity or 30 minutes of activity 5 times a week. If you are not used to doing this level of exercise you should contact your health provider to see if this is appropriate for you. Moderate activity is defined as walking, cycling, gardening and housework. It might be an exercise class on TV. It might be light weight lifting with water bottles.

How do I get started?

Spring is here, get outside and garden, even small tasks can be a good activity..., Michelle Kofler, PT

From the WHO:

“Try and reduce long periods of time spent sitting, whether for work, studying, watching TV, reading or using social media,...take short 3-5 minute breaks, simply stand up and stretch or even better , take a walk.”

“Set up a regular routine to be active every day, by planning a physical activity or exercise break by yourself, by joining an on line class,... making a specific time to be active helps ensure you get your daily physical activity.”

“Be active with your family and friends, connecting with others can help you and your family: in the home and elsewhere spend time together and be active” (Be careful to maintain social distancing and wear face masks when out in public)

“Set yourself goals”, by choosing specific activities, done at specific times, you will increase your chances of success. Some folks find keeping exercise logs or lists of when and of what activities they complete helpful.

The bottom line is find something you enjoy, something you find peace and satisfaction completing, either by yourself or around others you care for. In that way you can enhance and maintain your health.

If you have specific exercise needs please contact your Valley Medical Group Primary Care Provider. The Valley Medical Group Physical and Occupational (Hand) Therapy Team remains available by referral during this time thru telehealth platforms by phone, Face Time, Zoom and Doxy.