

Aerobic Exercise Is The Key To Fitness

Aerobic exercise is important at all ages. You are never told too old to begin an aerobic exercise program and to experience the often dramatic benefits. There are, of course, a few special considerations involved in beginning an exercise program later in life. If you have been de-conditioned by avoiding exercise for some time, you are likely to start at a lower level of physical ability than would a younger person. You may be more susceptible to fractures if you fall and injure yourself. You may have an underlying medical condition that limits your choice of exercise activities. You may need to talk with your doctor for advice as to exactly how to proceed. Nevertheless, at your age, you need aerobic exercise more than ever, and there is almost always a way to get it.

Some people worry that they have only so many heartbeats in a lifetime, and that exercise will increase their heart rates and use them up. In fact, because of the decrease in resting heart rate, the fit individual uses 10 to 25% fewer heartbeats in the course of a day, even after allowing for the increase during exercise periods. Aerobic training also builds good muscle tone, improves reflexes, improves balance, burn fat, and makes the bones stronger.

Much has been made of reaching a particular heart rate during exercise, one that avoids too much stress and yet provides the "training effect." Usually it is difficult to count your pulse while you are exercising, but you can check it by counting the pulse in your wrist for 15 seconds immediately after you stop exercising and then multiplying by 4. more important, as your training progresses, you may wish to count your resting pulse, perhaps in bed in the morning before you get up. The goal here is a resting heart rate of about 60 beats per minute. An individual who is not fit will typically have a resting heart rate of 75 or so.

There are easier ways of telling how you are doing. Endurance activity is a bit uncomfortable at first, and then becomes quite comfortable as your training program persists. It is not "all out." You should be able to carry on a conversation while you are exercising. On the other hand, you should be breaking a sweat during each exercise period. The sweating indicates that the exercise has raised your internal body temperature.

Aerobic exercise must be sustained activity. You need at least 10 or 15 minutes of exercise each session. You can progress up to 200 minutes per week, spread out over five to seven sessions; beyond this amount little further benefits seems to result.

Your choice of a particular aerobic activity depends on your own desires and your present level of fitness. The activity should be one that can be graded; that is, you should be able to easily and gradually increase the effort and the duration of the exercise.

Walking by itself not always an aerobic exercise, but it provides very important health benefits. If you haven't been exercising at all, start by walking. For seniors, a gradual increase in walking activity, up to a minimum of 150 minutes per week, usually should precede attempting a more strenuous aerobic program. Walking briskly can be aerobic, but you need to push the pace quite a bit to break a sweat and get your heart rate up. Walking uphill or upstairs can quite quickly become aerobic.

Jogging, swimming, and brisk walking are appropriate for all ages, and many seniors of all ages participate. Master swim programs are increasingly popular.

Inside the house, stationary bicycles or cross-country ski machines are good. Some individuals like to use radio earphones while they exercise; others exercise indoors while watching evening news. While almost any activity from gardening to tennis can be aerobic for some, remember that the exercise can't be "start and stop." Aerobic activity can't come in bursts; it must be sustained for at least a 10- to 15-minute period.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

About the Author

Raymond Lee is one of the foremost experts in the health and fitness industry and is the Founder of Bodyfixes.com specializing in body health, muscle development and dieting. Visit <http://www.bodyfixes.com> for more information.