



EXERCISE – GO FOR THE (CALORIE) “BURN”

Lots of people are finding time to exercise. And with good reason! They seem to know a little secret about why exercise is so important. Probably the most familiar benefit of exercise is its role in weight loss and weight maintenance. Successful weight loss and weight maintenance is enhanced with regular physical activity. But beware! If you increase your activity and don't reduce your calorie intake, weight loss, while not impossible, will be slow. If you increase your activity and decrease the number of calories you take in, you will see a faster loss than with increasing activity alone. Equally important, the exercise program you started during your weight loss program is essential for maintaining your new found weight.

Exercise encourages the body to burn extra fat as fuel, but without the 'starvation signals' that a restrictive dieting approach may produce. In fact, exercise helps the body condition itself to be a more effective user of fat for fuel. Building muscle through exercise, also helps increase metabolism and, consequently, increases the caloric needs of the body. Muscle tissue requires more energy than fat tissue, so it follows that a more muscular person can eat more and still maintain a healthy weight.

But how much activity is enough? The current recommendations for physical activity are for individuals to participate in at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity at a minimum of 3 to 5 days per week. If lack of time or energy prevent you from exercising for 30+ continuous minutes, break it down into segments during the day. Research shows physical activity that is broken into 10 to 15 minute segments to total 30 to 40 minutes per day will also provides benefits. A well-rounded program should not only improve your fitness, but also your strength and flexibility. To improve your strength, add two to three days of strength training to your aerobic routine. You can improve your flexibility by starting and finishing your aerobic and

strength training activities with stretches.

To lose weight, aim for burning about 1000-2000 calories per week from activity. You can do this by participating in your activity three to four days a week, burning 300 - 500 calories per session. You may also reap the same benefits with an activity four to five days a week, burning 200 – 400 calories per session. Keep in mind that you shouldn't expect to see changes on the scale right away. Fat weight loss is a slow, steady process. It's not uncommon to sometimes see a weight gain in the initial stages. That's because muscle weighs more than fat. Rest assured, if you are losing inches (your clothes feel looser), you are losing body fat.

The chart below compares the number of calories burned at a given body weight for different physical activities.

Type of Physical Activity and approximate calories burned by exercising for 30 minutes according to a person's body weight.	Calories burned in 30 minutes of exercise			
	125 pounds	150 pounds	175 pounds	200 pounds
If it takes you 15 minutes to walk 1 mile	170	200	225	240
Running a mile in 9 minutes	330	390	460	525
Stair climbing at moderate pace	300	375	425	480
Stationary biking with moderate tension	190	225	260	300
Aerobic dancing	140	170	200	225
Step aerobics – 120 steps per minute	300	375	440	500
Rowing machine	350	420	495	565
Light weight training	150	185	215	250

Chart adapted from: *The Balancing Act Nutrition and Weight Guide*, G. Kostas, MPH., RD., Dallas, 1993

Go ahead...take that first step. Exercise for a heightened state of health and fitness. For more information on exercise, nutrition and weight control, contact your Health and Wellness Center (HAWC).

Shape Your Future...Your Weigh!™