

JANUARY 2021: HEALTHY WEIGHT AWARENESS MONTH



January is Healthy Weight Month so get physical. Physical activity is proven to help with achieving and maintaining a healthy weight. The following article offers encouragement and suggestions on how and why it is important to be physical active and be physical fit.

Importance of Physical Fitness on Heart Health

The weather has cooled off and the holidays are over, so now it's time to focus on our physical fitness. Physical activity is important for both a healthy mind and body for people of all ages. Research has shown that moderate intensity on a regular basis increases your physical activity level and can improve health and well-being. However, when changing your level of activity, consult a health-care provider for individual considerations and/or restrictions. The following are some of the identified benefits of a regular exercise program:

- **Control Weight:** Physical activity and diet are two important components in controlling your weight. To maintain weight, 150 minutes of moderated-intensity aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity is required per week
- **Reduced risk for cardiovascular disease:** Heart disease and stroke are the two leading causes of death in the United States. To reduce risk for this disease, a minimum of 150 minutes/week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity is required
- **Reduced risk of Type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome:** A minimum of 120 to 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity will lower rates of Type 2 Diabetes and Metabolic Syndrome
- **Reduced risk of some cancers:** Physical activity reduces the risk of colon cancer and breast cancer

- **Strengthened bones and muscles:** A minimum of 120 to 300 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity that includes muscle-strengthening and weight bearing activities can help in preventing bone density loss
- **Improve your mental health and mood:** Aerobic and strengthening exercises for 30-60 minutes 3 to 5 times per week can assist in thinking, learning, and judgment skills
- **Increase your chances of living longer:** People who are physically active for about 7 hours a week have a 40 percent lower risk of dying than those who are active for less than 30 minutes a week. A minimum of 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity is required to reduce this risk

The Warm-Up

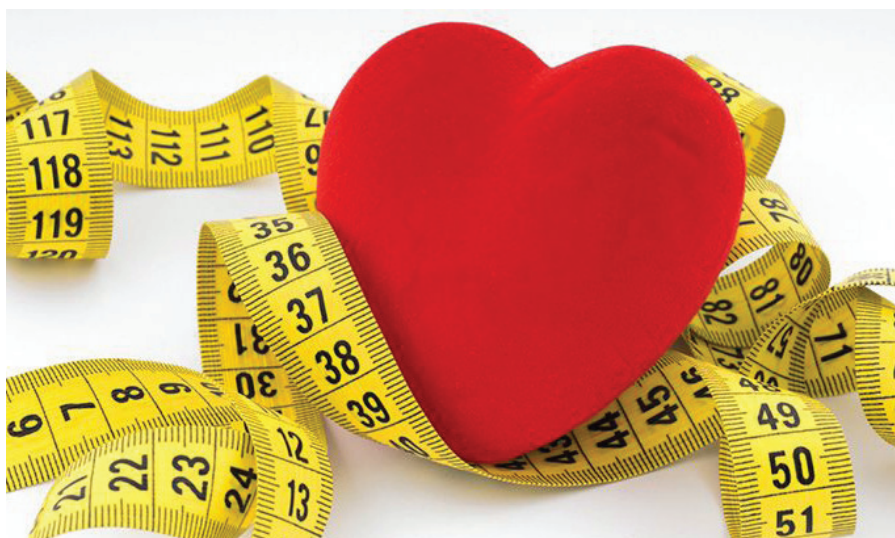
Warm up exercises are a critical component in preparing to perform any sport or fitness training program. The purpose of the warm-up is to provide a safe muscle preparation by providing a dynamic muscle stretch. Dynamic stretching can be defined as a controlled motion gradually forcing body parts past its usual range of motion. Warm-ups are done for 10 to 15 minute and consist of light, physical, simulating activity and exercise.

Warm up exercises are contrary to the old myth of performing only static stretches prior to any exercise program. Static stretches can be defined by maintaining the position of the muscle while it is under tension causing the muscle to lengthen. Current research has shown that static stretches prior to an exercise program does not have any physiological benefits. Static stretches are shown to be more appropriate at the end of the workout program as part of the cool down, promoting maximum muscle range of motion of the involved muscle group. Cool down exercises should contain 5 to 10 minutes of easy exercise followed by 10 to 20 minutes of stretching.

Exercise Options

Now that you are warmed up and ready to go, what are some exercises that will promote the above health benefits?

- **Moderate Physical Activity:** Activity in which respiration and heart rate is increased resulting in the ability to still carry on a conversation



Heart-Healthy Habits

for a
Better Tomorrow

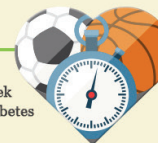
Maintain a Healthy Weight

Maintaining a healthy weight not only makes you feel good about yourself, but it also reduces your risk of high blood pressure, diabetes and high cholesterol.



Stay Active

Incorporating 30 minutes of moderate physical activity at least five times a week can lower your risk of heart disease, diabetes and stroke.



Follow a Healthy Diet

A healthy diet of whole-grain fiber, lean proteins, fruits and vegetables is one of the best defenses against cardiovascular disease, and key component to heart-healthy living.



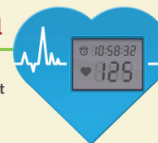
Quit Smoking

Quitting smoking will reduce your risk of coronary heart disease, hardened arteries, aneurysms, blood clots and stroke.



Monitor Your Cholesterol

Be proactive and monitor your cholesterol to reduce your risk of heart disease, stroke and heart attack.



Watch Your Blood Pressure

High blood pressure can lead to stroke, kidney damage and heart and coronary artery issues.



Are you Ready to Practice Heart-Healthy Habits?

Kickstart a heart-healthy lifestyle with Cardiac Services at Greene County Medical Center. You'll be rewarded with a higher quality of life and a healthier you!





- Walking briskly
- Light yard work
- Cycling at a casual pace
- **Vigorous Physical Activity:** Activity in which respiration and heart rate is increased, resulting in the inability to carry on a conversation
 - Jogging/running
 - Swimming laps
 - Cross-country skiing
 - Most competitive sports

Implementing Exercise Programs, despite the proven benefits of physical activity, more than 50% of Americans do not get enough physical activity to provide health benefits. Roughly 25% of all adults are not active in their leisure time.

Do you more often fall in the 25% category of adults who are not active at all in their leisure time?? If so, it's time to begin your new exercise program and lifestyle change. For the New Year, make a pledge to yourself and a commitment to physical activity. This will help you stay motivated and stay on track to reach your physical fitness goals for 2021.

Importance of the 'Life Effect' on Blood Pressure and Cholesterol on Heart Health

At the **American College of Cardiology** 64th Annual Scientific Session in San Diego, one study presented in March focused on the value of our initial motivation to change, as well the additive value of endurance. The study committed to long-term care of **atrial fibrillation patients**. Atrial fibrillation is one of the most common heart rhythm disorders and can cause stroke, **heart failure**, poor quality of life and even death. The study showed that in most people, atrial fibrillation can be prevented and perhaps in those patients in whom it has already developed, the disease can be reverse.

The study involved **355 patients** who had developed atrial fibrillation. Unlike most clinics, the one where these patients were treated also sent them to a lifestyle

modification clinic where they examined the impact of early weight loss after the counseling. Their findings are a great reason for the great optimism in those who have atrial fibrillation, high blood pressure, diabetes or any combination of these diseases.

Here is a summary of what they reported:

- Blood pressure improved as the amount of weight loss increased—from less than 3%, to 3% to 9% and then over 10%
- Those patients who had more than a 10% weight loss were able to reduce their need for BP (blood pressure) medications by 50%, on average, while maintaining normal blood pressure levels
- High cholesterol also improved. In those who did experienced 3% to 9% weight loss, cholesterol decreased by 25 milligrams per deciliter (mg/dl) on average
- For those who lost more than 10% of their weight, the average cholesterol decrease was even better, approximately 45 mg/dl. Cholesterol improvement was observed in the group with the biggest weight loss despite the fact that 50% of them stopped taking their **cholesterol medications**
- The group with more than 10% weight loss had less diabetes—from 30% having prediabetes or diabetes to only 4% with these diseases at the last follow-up

How did the Heart respond?

Data on patients' hearts showed that when lifestyle changes are made, heart disease could be reversed. The heart chamber that creates atrial fibrillation decreased in size to near normal levels. The wall thickness of the heart, which is felt typically is felt to be permanent despite use of medications, decreased, making the heart more flexible and adaptive. As a consequence, the amount of atrial fibrillation decreased dramatically.



In the group with the weight loss of more than 10%, the burden of atrial fibrillation fell by 50%. In all weight loss categories, atrial fibrillation levels decreased from 20% to 50%. These patients reported that they felt better and their quality of life improved.

Lifestyle change was not a miracle cure, as many people still experienced some atrial fibrillation. But the study highlights the value of personal choices and lifestyle changes in disease management. The study provides evidence that you can take control of your health.

The study provided two important additional insights:

- First, those who had sustained weight loss or continued to lose weight did the best. This is not overly surprising, but it gives us incentive to keep up the fight
- Second, those who lost weight initially and then gained it back still did better than those who never lost weight. In fact, even if their weight continued to fluctuate, they were 20% less likely to experience atrial fibrillation. This finding teaches us that initial effort is important as well, even if we slip up and have trouble keeping away from old habits

What was the key to long-term weight loss?

A lot of credit was given to the use of a lifestyle modification clinic. Patients had the opportunity to use a team of professionals to help them. This team also made them accountable for change. Those who refused to participate in the clinic and did it on their own were more likely to not lose weight. This tells us to surround ourselves with a good supportive team that will expect us to endure and help us when times are difficult. The team can come from family, friends, and hopefully, as prevention emphasis, lifestyle clinics.

Kevin Durant, professional basketball player, provided insight into his greatness during his **Most Valuable Player award speech**. He said, "I failed so many times and got back up. I've been through the toughest times with my family, but I'm still standing."

We are all going to struggle at times with consistently making healthy decisions. This study teaches us that it is worth it. It also teaches us that it is important to get back up each time we fall and try again.

