

Total Nutrition

Five Reasons To Stay Active

by *Mindy Hermann, R.D.*

(NAPSA)—In my 20s, I made annual resolutions to become more active and usually broke each one within the first few weeks of the year. Then a friend's innocent comment—"After 30, it's a fight against gravity"—hit home, and I've been active ever since. I am certain that physical activity helps me maintain my weight. For me, it is also a great stress reliever. And surprisingly, the only thing that relieves a headache or mid-afternoon fatigue is a long walk or an hour at the health club.



Mindy Hermann

Your personal benefits may be different, but here are five of the best reasons to stay active and why activity can benefit your daily routine:

1. Cardiovascular fitness—Cardiovascular fitness means that your heart, lungs and blood vessels are in good health. Aerobic activities that increase your breathing help build up these important organs.

2. Strength building—Physical activity strengthens and tones muscles so they can work longer without tiring. Stronger muscles can lift things more easily.

3. Flexibility—Building flexibility by stretching muscles helps protect them from strains and keeps them limber. People who are flexible may be better able to perform daily activities such as tying shoes and reaching down to pick up items from the floor.

Activities To Try

Cardiovascular: *dancing, elliptical machine*

Strength: *free weights, machine circuit*

Flexibility: *yoga, stretching*

Bone Building: *walking, snowboarding*

Energy: *all exercises*



4. Bone building—Bones become stronger through “weight-bearing” activities that rely on feet and legs to support the body's weight. The pull on bones by stronger muscles helps build bone strength.

5. Energy—Physical activity boosts “feel good” chemicals in the body.

Which activities are best for you? “The best activities are those that you enjoy,” says Chris Rosenbloom, Ph.D., R.D., a professor in the Division of Nutrition at the College of Health and Human Sciences, Georgia State University. “Walking, swimming and cycling are all popular activities. And don't be afraid to try any sport that interests you.” Dr. Rosenbloom encourages adults who have been inactive to start slowly and gradually build up the duration and intensity of exercise.

Exercising in the morning? Have a low-fat breakfast of Whole Grain Total, fruit and skim milk before or shortly after your activities, for a nutritious start to the day.

Mindy Hermann, MBA, RD, is a nutrition writer for women's, health and fitness magazines. She is the co-author of “Change One” and the American Medical Association's “Family Health Cookbook.”



Note to Editors: This is Series VI—12 of 26.