

Army *Safety* Gram

Leading on the Edge for Safety *Excellence*

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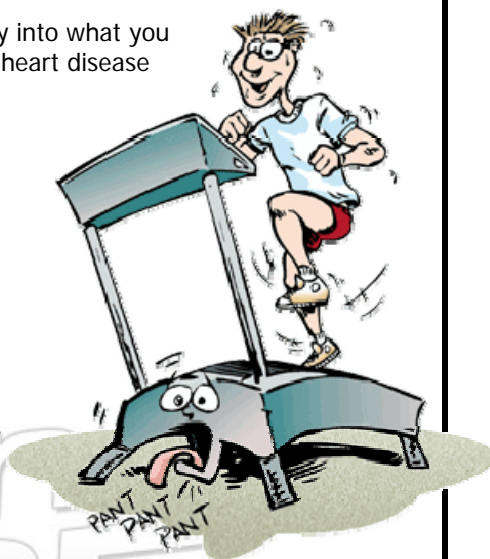
Keep In Shape and Stay Safe

Physical activity fitness gives you infinite possibilities. It allows you to mold your body into what you would like it to be. It lets you grab hold of your future, preventing chronic back pain, heart disease and all sorts of other chronic illnesses.

The benefits of physical activity include:

- ◆ Improved self-confidence, self-esteem, self-control
- ◆ Improved muscular strength, flexibility, and endurance.
- ◆ Helping students set and achieve personal goals.
- ◆ Stresses bones, increasing density.
- ◆ Provides a release from tension and anxiety.
- ◆ Counteracts major risk factors of heart disease and other chronic illnesses.
- ◆ Establishes a positive life-long attitude towards physical fitness.

Aside from their benefits, physical activity and fitness also come with safety concerns. Three million sports injuries occurred last year in North America. Many of these could have been prevented had the proper precautions and protective equipment been worn.



The following guidelines and precautions will help ensure your safety when participating in physical activity.

- ◆ Proper attire is a requirement, not an option. Proper fitness attire gives you increased mobility and freedom.
- ◆ Wearing proper shoes is also a necessity. They provide good shock absorption and encourage flexibility, control, and stability in the heel, decreasing the chance of ankle slips, rolls, or sprains.
- ◆ Never horse around when conducting fitness activities. Injuries occur because of carelessness and inattention.
- ◆ Proper hygiene is also a factor. Showering is encouraged following vigorous exercise.
- ◆ Ask your doctor about any precautions you should take because of pre-existing medical conditions.
- ◆ Be realistic about the sports you participate in. Certain sports demand specific physical characteristics. Choose a sport that will match your physical attributes and abilities.
- ◆ Injuries are most likely to occur when minimal effort is put forth. Giving 100 per cent all the time will significantly decrease your chances of getting hurt.

Here are some reminders of what to do if you do have an injury:

- ◆ Always stop what you are doing. Continuing activity will only add to the pain and severity of the injury.
- ◆ Seeing a physiotherapist is another great idea. They can recommend stretching exercises to speed recovery and prevent future incidents.
- ◆ Rest the injury, and avoid irritating it while performing daily activities. The severity of the injury will determine the length of rest.
- ◆ Ice all injuries. This drastically decreases inflammation, swelling, and pain. Never apply ice directly to skin because frostbite can quickly set in.
- ◆ Injuries vary in seriousness. You should get help when you think something is broken, you can't move it, it feels numb, or causes severe pain.



You need to make fitness a priority, because exercise can help you cope with all aspects of your life.