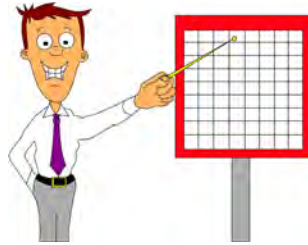


# Facts, Figures & Fictions:



- ☞ **Regular Exercise Speeds Healing by 25%**  
According to research done at Ohio State University by Charles F. Emery, those exercising regularly healed a small puncture wound on their arm in an average of 29 days compared to 39 days in sedentary people.
- ☞ **Exercise Helps Prevent Alzheimer's Disease**  
A large six-year study recently published in *Annals of Internal Medicine* finds that people over 65 who exercise regularly are less likely to develop Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia.
- ☞ **Type 2 Diabetics Can Live Longer with Exercise**  
Two studies published in *Diabetes Care* show that diabetics who exercise moderately or more were half as likely to die during the eighteen-year period of the studies.
- ☞ **Exercise Adds Life to Your Years**  
A new study from the University of Washington in Seattle indicates that much of the decline associated with age is preventable by physical activity. Loss of muscle strength and even "middle-age spread" are the result of decreased physical activity and not "age."
- ☞ **Still Another Reason to Exercise**  
A recent Finnish Study in the *European Heart Journal* found that exercise reduces blood levels of C-reactive protein, a marker for the inflammation associated with heart disease and diabetes.

Information gathered from the Berkeley Wellness Letter, 2005/2006

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# Health Unlimited



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## Physical Activity is... Powerful Medicine

by Don Hall, DrPH, CHES

The best medicines are those that prevent disease and improve quality of life. You may not think of physical activity as medicine, but in fact, when taken daily, it is powerful medicine. For example, would you like to prevent cancer? A recent report by the American Cancer Society stated that regular exercise may be helpful in preventing breast, colon, prostate, and endometrium cancer, some of the most common cancers today.

Interested in preventing diabetes, one of the fastest growing and serious diseases today? Researchers looked at the risk of developing diabetes over a 15-year study of 2,478 young adults (less than 30). Those who were sedentary at the start of the study but became physically active during the 15-year follow-up were 60% less likely to develop diabetes compared to those who remained sedentary. Imagine the impact on the health of our nation and health care costs if every sedentary person became physically active! The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that about 25% of all health care costs are linked to a sedentary lifestyle and excess weight.



Want to prevent a heart attack? In the Harvard study of some 80,000 nurses, those who walked at least half an hour 5 or more days per week had only half as many heart attacks as those who didn't exercise regularly.

Here are other benefits shown by large research studies (comparing active or high fit persons to inactive or low fit persons):

- Brisk walking cut the risk of hip fracture in older women by 65%.
- Fit men had 68% fewer strokes.
- Physically active men were 46% less likely to have high blood pressure.
- Fit men were 34% less likely to catch a cold or flu bug.
- Fit persons have less depression and are happier.
- Fit persons were only half as likely to die from any cause over a large 10-year study.



People who get regular physical activity are also less likely to be overweight, have more energy, are happier and less depressed, sleep better, and have less arthritis and joint pain.

Active people live longer. The Adventist Health Study and the Alameda County Study, two large population studies, both showed physical activity to be a top predictor of long life (even better than if you were a vegetarian or not). The Harvard Alumni study showed that for every hour you exercise, you increase your life expectancy by two hours. Not a bad investment!

Over 100 years ago, Ellen White wrote this statement on physical activity. “All who can possibly do so ought to walk in the open air every day, summer and winter. A walk, even in winter, would be more beneficial to the health than all the medicine the doctors may prescribe.” (Counsels on Health, page 52). Do you believe it? The research seems quite convincing.

To gain these health advantages, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American College of Sport’s Medicine recommend, “Every US adult should accumulate 30 minutes or more of moderate-intensity physical activity on most, preferably all, days of the week.” Examples include brisk walking, biking, swimming, active gardening, and other physical activities that make you breathe deeply (but not be out of breath) and make you sweat. Younger, fit persons, may enjoy more vigorous activity including jogging and active sports.

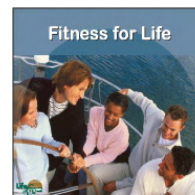
If you do not currently engage in regular physical activity, you should begin by incorporating a few minutes of physical activity into each day, gradually building up to 30 minutes or more of moderate-intensity activity. If you have any health problems, check with your doctor for specific guidance.

Here are other principles that can help you maintain an active lifestyle:

- Choose activities you enjoy. If you don’t like what you do, you won’t keep it up for long.
- Ask someone to go with you. An exercise buddy helps you be more faithful.
- Add variety by doing different activities on different days, or choose new walking routes.
- Exercise in the cool of the day (morning or late in the day) and drink plenty of fluids.
- Get good walking shoes and wear comfortable exercise clothing.
- Set goals and keep records. You may want to record minutes, miles, or steps per day.
- Take a favorite Bible verse to memorize or meditate on while walking (see Isaiah 40:30-31).
- Look for ways to be more active daily: take the stairs, walk to the store, walk the dog, walk some during the noon hour, take breaks frequently, take active vacations.
- Join a gym or fitness class. If needed, ask a fitness trainer to help you get started.
- Do some stretching and strengthening exercise 2-3 times weekly as well as aerobics.

As you begin to be more active, your strength, health, and mental outlook will improve; and your spirit will soar! Choose an active lifestyle and experience the good health God wants everyone to enjoy.

Don Hall is the founder and chairman of the board of Wellsource, Inc. He is a pioneer in the field of fitness assessment.



For an Exercise Program in Your Church try  
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