

QUESTION: How much exercise do you need to feel any benefits?

It depends on your present fitness level. If you've been sedentary, it won't take much to feel the benefits. I highly recommend starting any exercise program with a warm-up to prepare the body for the workout. *Before you begin any exercise program consult your physician.*

THE WARM-UP- Can't stress this enough! A good warm-up ensures that your muscles are well supplied with oxygen. By slowly raising your heart rate, the warm-up also helps minimize stress on your heart, and raises your muscles' temperature for better flexibility. A warm-up will also bring synovial fluid to lubricate the joint for the same purpose you put oil in your car, to protect it. Warm-ups can range from 3-8 minutes depending on your fitness level and health conditions.

CARDIO-It is recommended to start with 15-20 minutes of moderate cardio a day. Moderate for some may be walking, for others it may be a brisk walk, or a light jog, or a short run. What you determine to be moderate may change as you increase your cardiovascular endurance. Cardio Bursts are what I like to do with my clients (under my watchful eye). Cardio Bursts are high intensity- low duration type movements to increase your heart rate in 30 seconds progressing to 1-2 minutes depending on your cardiovascular fitness. NOTE: (Cardio bursts are not for everybody or certain health conditions) Cardio bursts could be used for individuals who don't have time for longer cardio workouts or want a way of elevating the heart rate for a good calorie burn in between strength training exercises. Whatever cardio exercises you chose to use, most people feel energized immediately after the exercise. In general, you should feel more energy within the first couple of weeks and continue to feel more energy if you stay consistent with any exercise that elevates your heart rate.

STRENGTH-If you add strength training to your workouts, you should feel stronger within 3-4 weeks. Unfortunately, body shape changes take longer. In the first couple of weeks to a month besides feeling more energized, exercisers usually have less back pain, stress relief, sleep better, and a boost of confidence from improving their health. NOTE: Muscle loss is a key component in weight gain in our middle years. Inactive individuals lose about five pounds of muscle per decade resulting in approximately 5% reduction in their resting metabolic rate over the same time period. Adding muscle will help you lose weight and maintain your weight. For best results to build muscle, workout each muscle group 2-3 times a week with a day of rest in between your workouts.

Always listen to your body and see how your body responds to the amount of exercise before you increase the duration or intensity of your workout. Expect to feel some soreness in the beginning which should alleviate as you continue to exercise. Consult with a fitness professional for more specific exercise programs.

Invest in your health...it is worth the time!