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"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"

Walking Alone is Not Enough Exercise

A study of over 100 men and women shows that just walking as exercise may not be enough to produce significant health benefits. The study compared a popular walking exercise program to a more traditional fitness routine incorporating cardio-based activities on treadmills and stationary bicycles. The traditional group was asked to exercise at a moderate intensity, whereas the walking group was allowed to go at a self-selected pace.

The traditional fitness program improved aerobic fitness and reduced systolic blood pressure more than the walking program. Those who took part in the active regimen increased their peak oxygen uptake by 10 percent, compared to 4 percent for the other group. Systolic blood pressure also dropped by 10 percent for the traditional group and 4 percent for the walking group. Basically, if each group spent the same amount of time exercising, the people in the traditional fitness routine improved significantly more.

When exercising, it is important to listen to your body, and *not* to your brain or intellect. Many of us feel that as long as we put in the *time*, it will be sufficient to get the necessary *amount* of exercise. So many people go out for a slow walk for 10 or 15 minutes under the false belief that it will fulfill their exercise needs. Now, if a man weighed 300 lbs and had never exercised much in the past, a 15-minute walk may just do it. He is so heavy that any exercise at all is making him work very hard. However, even for him, after awhile his body would adjust to it and he would require a larger amount of activity to achieve the same exercise benefit.

About two-thirds of us are overweight and we need to repay the serious exercise debt we have acquired to optimize our health. Basically, we have so many calories stored as fat in our bodies, that we need to burn them off *as well as* burn off more than we consume each day.

I can't tell you how many articles and studies I have read that state either running or walking a distance of one mile burns the same amount of calories, so why run and increase your risk of injury when you can walk and take it easy? Intuitively I have never bought that argument, but used the justification to continue running these past years

because it was more time efficient. Well now we find out that that there is real obvious logic to it that seemed to have escaped most expert's attention, and that is that it is not just calories burned but calories burned over a unit time that is the key. For example, if it takes me 8 minutes to run versus 20 minutes to walk one mile, I can run for the entire 20 minutes (the same amount of time it would take me to walk) and burn over twice as many calories.

In conclusion, the key to exercising effectively is to make sure the following variables are all taken in to consideration:

- How long you exercise
- How often you exercise
- How hard you exercise

In other words, you have to exercise long enough (time), three to five times per week (frequency), and at a level of effort (intensity) that burns the maximum amount of calories. By doing so, you will ensure all your hard efforts are not wasted and are having a positive effect on your body.

One note of caution. You should exercise hard enough so that it is difficult to talk to someone next to you. However, if you cannot carry on a conversation *at all*, then you have gone too far and need to decrease the intensity.