

## Move Your Body into Spring

Now that warmer weather has arrived, we all have the itch to get outside and to become active. We want to shake off the winter blahs, enjoy the sunshine and get our bodies in shape. Most people have this image that being in shape and fit is someone thin and athletic; one who can run miles and miles. What fitness really means is the ability of your heart, lungs and muscles to function effectively and efficiently. God designed our bodies to be active. Our sedentary lifestyle prevents our bodies from being used as God meant them to be. There are three basic types of physical activity.

- ♥ **Aerobic:** Activities that increase your breathing and heart rate, improves your stamina, endurance and cardio-vascular health. Health Benefits: reduces risk of high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes. Increases your energy, promotes weight loss and restful sleep, and decreases depression. Examples include: walking, running, bicycling, dancing, and swimming
- ♥ **Stretching:** Activities that strengthen the posture muscles (legs, back, and abdomen) increases the flexibility of your joints and range of motion, and assists in maintaining your balance. Health benefits: prevents falls, injuries, and joint pain and allows for better range of motion and quality of life. Examples include: dancing, court sports, martial arts, yoga, Tai-chi, Pilates.
- ♥ **Strength:** Activities that build muscle tissue and strengthen bones. Health Benefits: raises metabolism, helps control weight and blood sugar. Examples include working with weights, hiking, calisthenics, and manual labor.

The biggest obstacle to regular physical activity is making it part of your lifestyle. Integrate physical activity into your day through several small choices and actions.

- ✦ Wear a pedometer. It gives you a concrete measurement of how much activity you are actually doing as well as increasing your awareness. Aim for 5,000-10,000 steps/day. Clergy on Conference health insurance, sign up for a Virgin Healthmiles pedometer.
- ✦ Start small; go for 10 minute walks twice daily. After a week increase it to 15 minutes. Then increase the number of sessions.
- ✦ Dress for the weather to help keep you on track doing outside activities.
- ✦ Avoid the closest bathroom, use one further away.
- ✦ Make a habit of parking towards the back of lot, use the stairs when going down floors in a building.
- ✦ Write your work-out appointment in pen on your calendar. Be intentional about keeping it.
- ✦ Make sure you enjoy the physical activity that you choose.
- ✦ Use the buddy system; it's difficult to let someone else down.
- ✦ Team your work-out time with your prayer or meditation time, both body and soul will benefit.

*“Examine me, God, from head to foot.... Make sure I'm fit inside and out. So that I never lose sight of your love, but keep in step with you, never missing a beat”. (Psalm 26: 2-3 The Message)*

I invite you to look at your physical activity patterns and make a covenant with yourself and God to make an improvement. Both your body and soul will benefit.

*Kae Trittle, RN  
Wellness Coordinator*

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