

# How to begin your exercise programme



## ASSESS YOURSELF!

If you answer "yes" to any of the following questions, consult your doctor before beginning.

- Has your doctor ever said that you have a heart condition and recommended only approved physical activity?
- Do you have chest pain brought on by physical activity?
- Have you developed chest pain at rest in the past month?
- Do you lose consciousness or lose your balance as a result of dizziness?
- Is your doctor currently prescribing medication for your blood pressure or heart condition?

• Are you aware, through your own experience or a doctor's advice, of any other reason against your exercising without medical approval?

The above series of questions is deliberately inclusive. Answering "yes" above does not mean that you cannot exercise, only that it is advisable to check with your physician first.

## Why should we exercise?

Good health is not merely the absence of disease. It is the capacity to enjoy life and withstand challenges.

Above all, physical activity can give you new zest and energy that adds quality to your life. It does not matter how old you are or how active you have been in the past. Research shows that exercise benefits everyone – old and young, large and small, smokers and former smokers.

You already know you should exercise, but how do you do it? You would like to be healthy, but are not sure you have the time to fit exercise into your day. Realise that any new habit is difficult to establish at first, but it can be done.

## Plan exercise into your day

- look at your schedule
- make an appointment to exercise

## Set up a support network

Develop a support network

consisting of two sets of people. In the first set, include those who will exercise with you. In the second set, include people who will support you in your efforts. Explain to those who will attempt to sabotage your efforts that you are trying to develop healthy habits and that exercise is important to you.

## Set goals

Make goals that you can chart, because then you can see progress towards them.

Create a short-term plan for the next month and then one for a longer period of time, say four or six months. Set realistic goals, for example, walking five more minutes every week, or

losing one pound of fat a month. Do not expect to lose 30 pounds in two weeks.

For optimal physical fitness, you will want to work up to performing cardiovascular exercises like walking or bicycling three to five times per week for 20 minutes. Of course, whatever exercise you do will provide health gains, so do not worry if you cannot reach this frequency at first.

## What to expect when you start a programme

Exercise should not be dangerous if you start out gradually and build up to more strenuous activities. It is a good idea to check with your

doctor before starting an exercise programme.

You might feel stiff or sore when first starting out a programme, but you should never feel pain. Pain is your body's way of telling you that something is wrong. You also should not feel exhausted at the end of a workout.

If you feel pain or feel yourself getting overtired or out of breath, you should check with your doctor. Muscle soreness (not pain) tells you that exercise is affecting your body, so it is actually a good sign. Do not worry, however, because the soreness will last only a few days.

**Have Fun!!**

# How to love your



WITH VALENTINE'S DAY fast approaching here are ten top tips for loving your heart and keeping it healthy all year round.

- **Step out with a loved one.** Show someone you care by sharing a 30-minute brisk walk to help maintain heart health.
- **Keep up New Year's resolutions.** If you're trying to give up smoking, lose weight or get fit this year, keep your motivation high by examining all the health benefits your body is experiencing – and those yet to come!
- **Food of love.** Fruit make a wonderful dessert, and won't add to your waistline or your cholesterol.
- **Share a healthy snack.** Instead of coffee and a doughnut, try some healthy options – like a new flavour fruit juice or some dried fruit. This is an easy way to clock up two of your five daily recommended fruit and vegetables
- **Lose those love handles.** Lose your love handles with a low fat healthy diet combined with regular exercise. Once those extra pounds are shifted, not only will you look good but you will feel good too.
- **Go dancing.** A dance or exercise class is something you can get involved in. You might enjoy it so much that you continue it as part of a joint exercise plan.
- **Partner up.** Get a friend to be your exercise buddy and stay motivated together. This will help keep you focused and make exercise a fun way to keep fit and healthy.
- **Give yourself a break.** Make sure you find time in the day to take a break and relax. Slowing down your breathing will not only help you to stay calm and focused, but will keep you and your heart stress-free.
- **Stick to your limits.** Be aware of your alcohol consumption. If you are on a big night out, try alternating with a soft drink or water.
- **Be generous.** Share your hugs and smiles and spread a bit of happiness.

(Adapted from the British Heart Foundation's website: [www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk))



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**The Administration Manager  
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Jemmotts Lane  
St Michael  
BB 11156**

**Or by email to [enquiries@hsfbarbados.org](mailto:enquiries@hsfbarbados.org)**