

# Starting 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 physicians 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 ex-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 exercise like walking or bicycling three to five times per week for 20 minutes. Of course, whatever exercise you do will provide

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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!!

# Heart & Stroke Support Group formed

THE RECENTLY FORMED Heart & Stroke Support Group is well on its way to becoming an integral part of the **Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados (HSFB)**.

Set up in March this year, the group is an expansion of the Foundation's rehabilitation programme, providing support and comfort to persons who have had a heart problem or a stroke.

It replaces the Cardiac Support Group (CSG), which was formed in 1998, specifically to give support to persons who had suffered a heart attack.

However, when the Heart Foundation of Barbados in April last year embraced the interests of stroke to become the **HSFB**, all of the Foundation's activities and programmes were naturally expanded to include the incidence of stroke.

This is particularly so in the Cardiovascular Disease Prevention and Rehabilitation (CDP&R) programme, known as "The gym with a difference", where persons who have had a heart attack or stroke, or who are at risk, are provided with a well-structured and supervised programme of exercise, education, counselling and support.

Trained nurses monitor their progress, and there are sessions where such topics as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and hypertension, stress, medication, nutrition, cardiac procedures and exercise and

its benefits are addressed.

Another of the Foundation's key areas of activity is the Emergency Cardiac Care programme, which offers training in CPR and general first aid to individuals or groups.

Fully accredited American Heart Association instructors conduct courses for laypersons and health care providers, including medical students, medical doctors, nurses and paramedic personnel, that can save the lives of people who are having a heart attack or stroke.

Instruction is given in Basic Life Support, Advanced Life Support, Paediatric Advanced Life Support, as well as in the use of the Automated External Defibrillator, a simple but revolutionary device that restarts the dying heart.

Volunteers and other

interested persons form the nucleus of membership of the Heart & Stroke Support Group with staff members of the Foundation providing technical and administrative back-up.

The group gives support through visits to the patient following an operation, offering them counselling and gifts of comfort. The counselling is an ongoing process and continues after the patient is discharged. Importantly, counselling is also given to the patient's family.

Persons who have had the experience of a heart attack or stroke are encouraged to join the Heart & Stroke Support Group so that they can encourage and advise others who may have similar problems.

A number of fund-raising ventures are being planned in

order to sustain the group's activities. These include publishing material about the activities, aims and objectives of the group, also providing information and answers to questions that may be asked.

## Fundraising raffle now on

**PICTURE YOURSELF** winging your way to London, with a loved one by your side, and enjoying the delightful in-flight service that Virgin Atlantic Airways is known for, then receiving a warm welcome, genuine hospitality and comfortable accommodation at one of London's luxury hotels, 22 Jermyn Street, with spending money to boot!

That's the wonderful first prize in the Heart & Stroke

Foundation of Barbados' (HSFB) grand fundraising raffle, which is now on.

First prize is two return premium economy tickets to London compliments Virgin Atlantic, plus a five-night stay at 22 Jermyn Street.

Second prize is just as wonderful – a five-night stay for two at Tamarind Cove Hotel, with breakfast, lunch and dinner included.

Other attractive prizes to be won include an exercise

bike courtesy of Dacosta Manning Inc.

Tickets at \$25 are available at the HSFB's headquarters, Ladymeade Gardens, Jemmott's Lane, St Michael. Drop in to collect yours, or call 437-3312 for more information.

Proceeds from the raffle, to be drawn on October 6 2007, go to help fund the Foundation's programmes and projects.



**Create a poster or write an essay on the theme "Team Up For Healthy Hearts"**

**Kids:**  
5-8 years! Paint or draw a poster 8 1/2" x 14"  
9-11 years! Write an essay 350 words or less

Send with completed entry form to:  
Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados,  
3 Railway View, Ladymeade Gardens,  
Jemmott's Lane, St. Michael

Entry forms available at:  
The Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados and  
Guardian Life of the Caribbean Limited, Enfield House,  
Collymore Rock.

**Deadline: Friday 20th July, 2007.**

This competition is approved by the Ministry of Education.


