BENEFITS OF CARDIOVASCULAR ACTIVITY

WHAT IS CARDIOVASCULAR ACTIVITY?

Cardiovascular Activity: Better known as aerobic exercise, requires large muscle movement over a sustained period of time. It typically consists of walking, running, cycling, or swimming.

Frequency of Exercise: Refers to the number of times you exercise per week. Current guidelines recommend exercising at least three days a week and gradually increasing to five. When beginning an exercise program, it is important to start slow and give your body time to rest - recovery usually takes about 24 hours.

Duration of Exercise: Refers to the amount of time spent exercising. Start with 10 to 15 minutes of continuous activity. As you get in better shape, you can gradually increase the amount of time you exercise.

Intensity of Exercise: To determine if you are training too intensely or not intensely enough, you need to find your Heart Rate Training Zone (see heart rate formula on second page).

CARDIOVASCULAR ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

In 2007 the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) and American Heart Association (AHA) established requirements for cardiovascular activity.

Basic recommendations from ACSM and AHA:

Do moderately intense cardio 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week.

Or

Do vigorously intense cardio 20 minutes a day, 3 days a week.

And

Do 8 to 10 strength-training exercises, 8 to 12 repetitions of each exercise twice a week.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Exercise hard enough to raise your heart rate and break a sweat.
- During moderately intense cardio, you should still be able to carry on a conversation, but not be able to sing to someone.
- In order to lose weight or maintain weight loss, you may need to sustain 60 to 90 minutes of physical activity.
- Average healthy adults should achieve 30 minutes of activity daily.

BENEFITS OF CARDIOVASCULAR ACTIVITY

- Reduces the risk of heart disease
- Keeps weight under control
- Improves blood cholesterol levels
- Prevents and reduces high blood pressure
- High impact cardiovascular activity can prevent bone loss
- Boosts energy levels
- Improves sleep quality
- Reduces anxiety and depression; increases enthusiasm and optimism
- Increases muscle strength
- In older people, it helps delay or prevent chronic illnesses and diseases associated with aging and maintains quality of life and independence longer.

WARM-UP AND COOL DOWN

Warm Up — The warm up should last 5 to 10 minutes and be done at a low intensity prior to cardiovascular training and activity.

Cool Down — The cool down should last 5 to 10 minutes and be done at a low intensity after cardiovascular training and activity. After the cool down it is important that you stretch the primary muscles being used.

General warm up and cool down exercises include stationary biking, using the elliptical machine or light stair climbing.
GETTING STARTED

The great thing about exercise is you do not have to do it all at one time. After all, most people have very busy schedules and cannot workout continuously for long periods of time. Instead, you can do 1 mile walks in short bursts that will add up throughout your day. Here are some suggestions to get you started with cardiovascular activity:

- Take a walk on a treadmill before work. Then, take a 1-mile walk around the office or outside at lunch time.
- Take a walk after work with friends or the family dog.
- Take a walk on the treadmill while watching your favorite show before or after dinner.
- Take a walk up and down a couple flights of stairs during breaks, and use stairs instead of elevators when traveling around the office.
- Park further away at the shopping mall and walk the extra distance. Wear your walking shoes and sneak in an extra lap or two around the mall.

Note: Before starting a new exercise program, it is important to have a discussion with your doctor about types and levels of activity.

HEART RATE TRAINING ZONES

You can easily find your Target Heart Rate (THR) by using the Karvonen formula.

1) Resting Heart Rate (RHR):
Your pulse at rest = ______

2) Maximum Heart Rate (MHR):
220 - Age = ______

3) Heart Rate Reserve (HRR):
Max HR – Resting HR = ______

Once you have your Heart Rate Reserve, you can calculate your Target Heart Rate:

4) (HRR x .85) + RHR = Upper end of training zone
5) (HRR x .50) + RHR = Lower end of training zone

What is your Target Heart Rate Range _____ - _____?

HOW TO MONITOR YOUR ACTIVITY

Heart Rate - Monitor your heart rate by feeling for your pulse in your neck or on your wrist below your thumb. Place your pointer and middle fingers on your neck or wrist, avoiding your thumb, as it has its own pulse and will disrupt your reading. Count heart beats for 10 seconds and multiply that number by 6. You can also wear a heart rate monitor.

Pedometers - A pedometer is actually a very basic device which can be used to track the number of steps the user takes while wearing the pedometer. The user typically wears the pedometer on the waistband of the pants in a position where it can sense the movement of the hip.

RATE OF PERCEIVED EXERTION SCALE (RPE)

The RPE scale is used to measure the intensity of your exercise. The RPE scale runs from 0 to 10. The numbers below relate to phrases used to rate how easy or difficult you find an activity. For example, 0 (nothing at all) would be how you feel when sitting in a chair; 10 (very, very heavy) is how you feel when you can no longer continue the activity due to intensity or difficulty.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Nothing At All</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Very Light</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Light</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Somewhat Heavy</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Very, Very Heavy</td>
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In most cases, you should exercise at a level that feels moderate (3) to somewhat heavy (4). When using this rating scale, remember to include feelings of shortness of breath, as well as how tired you feel in your legs and in general.

Resources:
www.WebMD.com
www.MayoClinic.com
www.ACSM.org