

Tips on Rebuilding AEROBIC FITNESS

PROVIDED BY AMAZING PLACE ACTIVITY DIRECTOR
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Information technology has increased productivity and innovation of individuals while simultaneously reduced their physical expenditure and mental leisure time. The incredible amount of data and the sedentary means by which that data is processed puts an incredible strain on the body both psychologically and physically. Regular aerobic exercise will strengthen your cardiovascular system as well as provide a mental “time out” in an otherwise cognitively demanding and stressful day.

The CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention) recommends 150 minutes of moderate intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity aerobic activity per week.

Before you start an exercise program you should answer the following questions. If your answer is yes to any of the questions you should consult your physician and determine what activities you should avoid.

The PAR-Q (Physical Readiness Questionnaire)

- Has your doctor ever said you have a heart condition and that you should only do physical activity recommended by a doctor?
- Do you feel pain in your chest when you do physical activity?
- In the past month, have you had chest pain when you were not doing physical activity?
- Do you lose your balance because of dizziness or do you ever lose consciousness?
- Do you have a bone or joint problem that could be made worse by a change in your physical activity?
- Is your doctor currently prescribing drugs for your blood pressure or heart condition?
- Do you know of any other reasons you should not do physical activity?

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Emile Unverzagt AD/TXC has been in the activity program at Amazing Place since December 2005. He became the Activity Director in November 2007. He leads the activity team in designing, scheduling and running approximately 20 different participant centered programs per day. He also works with the program director and nursing staff to develop individualized plans of care for Amazing Place participants.

Emile earned his BS in Sports and Exercise Science at West Texas A&M University while playing soccer on scholarship. He received his Master of Arts degree at the University of Houston-Clear Lake in Fitness and Human performance. Emile is a certified activity director through the Consortium for Therapeutic Recreation/ Activities of Texas. He is also a certified Red Cross instructor and licensed soccer coach. He still trains goalkeepers in the afternoon and several of his players are successful starters in the Olympic Development Program at the regional level.

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There are 4 variables to an aerobic exercise program; **Frequency** (*how often*), **Mode** (*what activity*), **Intensity** (*how hard*), and **Duration** (*how long*). Manipulating these variables will determine how successful your program will be. Consulting a fitness professional will help you best adapt your program to your specific goals.

1. Frequency by far is the most important component and must be addressed first. Regular exercise will give you more energy, but it will not add more hours to a day. You must look at your daily life and find 30 minutes to an hour you can dedicate to yourself. This will affect your family so work together to determine when the best time will be. When you initially begin you should schedule 2-3 non-consecutive days a week. This will allow your body time to strengthen between workouts.

2. Mode or type of exercise is least important. Choose activities you enjoy doing for extended periods of time. Jogging, biking and swimming are aerobic activities, but so are dancing, washing the car and gardening. Pick something that will have you breathing heavy with a smile on your face.

3. Intensity is what induces your body's physiological changes. If your workout is too light your body won't need to adapt. If it is too difficult, slow down a little and keep going. Table 1 is a RPE (Rate of Perceived Exertion) scale. You can use it to rate your intensity level. Initially your workouts should be very light, a 9-10 on the scale. As you feel stronger you should challenge yourself to maintain a somewhat hard workload in the 12-14 range. By exercising at a vigorous level you will experience the health gains as you would exercising for twice as long at a moderate intensity.

4. Duration should initially be determined by your weakest link i.e. if your thigh begins to feel overly tight, slow down or stop if necessary and on your next workout attempt to go 10% longer. Repeat until you are completing 30-40 minutes of continuous exercise.

TABLE ONE

	RPE		RPE
No exertion at all	6		14
Extremely light	7	Hard (heavy)	15
	8		16
Very light	9	Very hard	17
	10		18
Light	11	Extremely hard	19
	12	Maximal exertion	20
Somewhat hard	13		

Helpful websites:
50millionpounds.gov
mayoclinic.com/health
cdc.gov
webmd.com

Quick Tips to maintaining your exercise program

- Get a workout buddy
You will remind each other why you are exercising
- Exercise close to home or work
If you have a ½ hr commute to the gym that leaves less time to exercise
- If your responsibilities change, change your workout schedule
Don't quit because your schedule changes, just reevaluate
- Don't feel selfish if you must turn down a favor because it conflicts with your workout schedule
Exercise is a priority
- Schedule physical time away from your workouts
Plan active workout vacations i.e. hiking or tour tunnels downtown