

The Benefits of Walking / Exercise for Older Adults

"Over 55 Club" Chino Hills Community Center

By Chris & Dave Master

More than 2,400 years ago Hippocrates wrote: "*Walking is man's best medicine*". He was definitely onto something .

1. Introductions, "Welcome" and our Personal Backgrounds

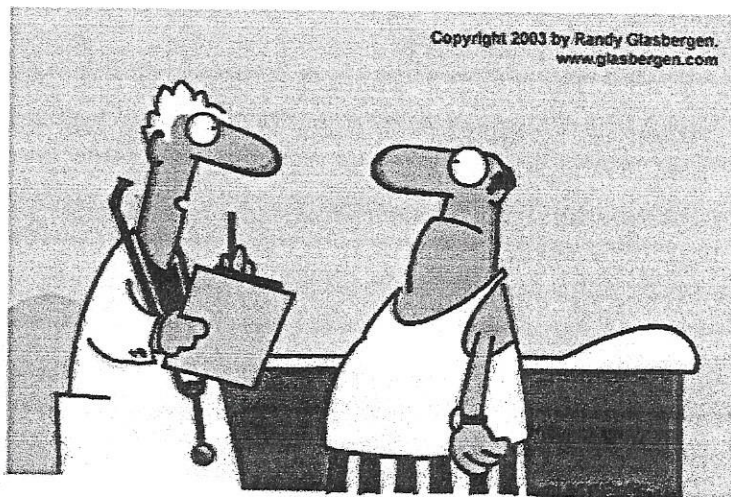
2. Top Fears of Aging Adults:

- a. Loss of independence / mobility
- b. Declining health
- c. Fear of falling / injury
- d. Cognitive / memory decline
- e. Isolation / loneliness

3. "Mind, Body & Spirit" Benefits of Exercise: "*Use It or Lose It*" & "*We Are What We Eat*"

a. Physical Benefits of Exercise:

General fitness; heart health; weight management; increasing metabolism; improving circulation; improve balance and coordination; increase muscle strength; stroke prevention; lowering blood pressure; controlling cholesterol; increasing lung function; improves immune function; reducing risks of a variety of cancers (esophageal, liver, breast, colon, stomach and GI tract cancers); strengthens foot muscles and tendons and decreases foot pain; lowers risk of developing type 2 diabetes; improves sleep patterns; increases bone density; improves joint cartilage health; increases both your longevity and quality of life.



"What fits your busy schedule better, exercising one hour a day or being dead 24 hours a day?"

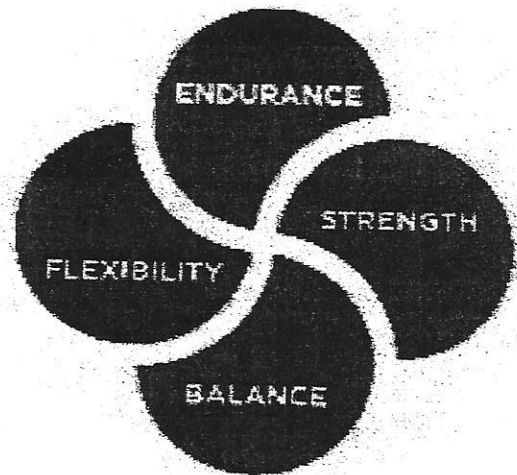
b. **Cognitive Benefits:** Regular aerobic exercise increases the size of your hippocampus (the part of the brain that is involved with memory and learning; studies show that regular aerobic exercise can slow cognitive decline, and the onset of dementia).

c. **Attitudinal and Outlook Changes:** Regular aerobic exercise releases endorphins and neurotransmitters that improve your mood; reduces the level of cortisol (a hormone linked to bad moods, increased anxiety, feelings of stress and depression). Promotes Mindfulness: "gets you out of your head", improves focus, promotes deeper thinking, and "connects you to the present moment".

4. Four Types of Exercise:

- a. Endurance
- b. Strength
- c. Balance
- d. Flexibility

* By age 70, we've lost 30% of the muscle mass (sarcopenia) that we had at age 20. Loss of mass = loss of strength and function. The good news: research shows that resistance training can reverse this!



5. Pre-requisites and Cautions:

- a. Get a health and heart exam before you begin walking regimen
- b. Baseline testing
- c. Follow your Healthcare Professional's advice
- d. Any gear, shoe, digital monitoring device, or orthopedic aid recommendations from your health professionals (Doctor, Nurse Practitioner, Physical Therapist, Nutritionist, etc.)

6. Basic Walking/Hiking Shoes, Clothing and Gear: Show & Tell. Consider recommendations of specialized gear, shoes, digital monitoring devices, or orthopedic aids by your health professionals (Doctor, Nurse Practitioner, Physical Therapist, Nutritionist, etc.)

- a. Comfortable hiking shoes (Walking Store; REI)
- b. Seasonally appropriate and comfortable clothing
- c. Layering
- d. Orthopedic support for back, knee, ankles or feet (if needed)
- e. Sunscreen and hat

- f. Electronics: pedometer; Fitbit; heart monitor; etc.
- g. Walking sticks / tracking poles

7. **Getting Started and Keeping it Going**

- a. Don't overdo it... *"Life is the ultimate marathon...not a sprint"*. Getting out of shape took time; getting back into shape will, too.
- b. Listen to your body. Pain, discomfort and injuries just slow the process and can be demoralizing.
- c. Enjoy the process... *"slow and steady wins the race"*.
- d. Challenge yourself: Increase distance, inclines, hills, stairs. Over time, you might consider increasing walking speed, frequency, and duration as you build your strength, and improve your general fitness.
- e. Safety: Let others know where and when you are walking; walk with friends; carry a phone; consider carrying pepper spray if you walk alone or hike in the hills.
- f. What are the most common EXCUSES for avoiding walking or exercising?

8. **What Are Your Goals? Are You Ready to Create Your Tomorrow, Today?**

***Close your eyes, take a few deep breaths, and relax... Visualize yourself becoming more active in some enjoyable activity. Feel yourself becoming stronger, more fit and full of energy. Ask: what are the first steps that you need to take to meet your goals? Write them down below.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

9. **Q & A**

10. **Resources:**

- * SilverSneakers.com
- * NutritionAction.com (Nutrition Action Newsletter)
- * nia.gov
- * ChinoHills.org (Hiking trails)
- * WebMd.com
- * prevention.com
- * AARP.org
- * ExperienceLife.com

WALKING

can positively impact 8 of the 10 most costly health conditions

Heart Attack



54% lower risk of heart attack with 2-4 hours of fast walking a week.

Angina

30-40% lower risk of coronary heart disease, of which angina is a symptom, with 3 hours of brisk walking per week.



Sinusitis

30% reduced risk of upper respiratory tract infections with a daily brisk walk.



Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

23% lower risk of developing COPD for smokers with moderate to high levels of physical activity.



Diabetes

54% lower death rates for type 2 diabetics who walk at least 3-4 hours a week.



Hypertension



6 point drop in systolic blood pressure for those who start to walk 5 days a week. A drop of just a few points can significantly reduce the risk of death from heart disease.

Low Back Pain

40% decreased likelihood of meaningful low-back disability with 3 or more hours of brisk walking a week.

Other Back Disorders

2 main causes of back pain - osteoporosis and arthritis - can be prevented or managed with regular walking.

Bring the benefits of walking to your company. Learn more about *Destination: You*, GlobalFit's innovative corporate walking program. 1.800.234.1500 or GlobalFit.com

Sources: Journal of Environmental and Exercise Medicine, Jan. 2000; BMJ Open, Oct. 2000; Canadian Family Physician, Feb. 2000; WJMD, Journal of Evidence-Based Complementary Medicine, 2007; 2007; Archives of Internal Medicine, Apr. 2000; Archives of Internal Medicine, Oct. 2000; Mayo Clinic; American Council on Exercise; Arthritis Foundation; Lightsource University; Daily Mail

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