

Exercise Matters



Exercise. It's vital to good health, it helps us maintain a healthy weight and strong muscles and bones and it's a natural mood enhancer. With all of its benefits, you'd think we'd all be clamoring to get more exercise every day, but most of us don't get enough.

"The one great thing about exercise is that you'll never regret it once you've done it," says Jill Stein, Certified Personal Trainer and Coordinator of the Fitness Class Program at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in the [Center for Integrative Medicine and Wellness](#). "And if you're having difficulty getting motivated, find something you enjoy, and set measurable goals - both short- and long-term." She suggests keeping a wall calendar in which you can mark off your accomplishments, and then rewarding yourself when you accomplish a goal.

"I also suggest joining a fitness class or group activity that fits in with your goals and lifestyle. Joining a class can help keep you on track by encouraging your commitment," Jill says.

Working with clients for many years, she has learned that making a three-fold commitment - time, personal and financial - will help you stay focused on getting in shape and feeling better. And, as an added benefit, you'll meet some new people and have some often needed "me" time.

Our Fitness Classes

If you're not getting enough exercise, or you simply want to spice up your routine, our fitness classes may be just what you're looking for.

We offer a wide variety of fitness classes to fit every personality and lifestyle, including Yoga, Mommy and Baby Pilates and Body Sculpting, Strength and Balance, Pilates, Aerobics, Tai Chi and more. And, according to Jill, "the great thing about our classes is that they last 11 weeks, so by the end of the class sessions, participants will be able to see and feel a real improvement, which is a fantastic motivator to continue exercising."

[View a list of our wellness and fitness classes >>](#)

Class Registration

Registration for fall classes at the hospital begins on Monday, October 25, 2010. You can register by phone by calling **1-877-926-4664** or [register online](#).

Getting the Exercise You Need

Jill has some advice about how much and what types of exercise you really need for optimal health and fitness.

Cardio

“If your goal is to lose weight, you should aim for 60 to 90 minutes of cardio most days of the week,” Jill says. “And to maintain your weight and improve fitness, you will need at least 30 minutes of cardio most days of the week. If you’re concerned about whether you’re working hard enough, try the “talk test.” If you can speak more than a two to five word sentence without taking a deep breath, you should pick up the pace.” Some of our cardio classes are Low-Impact Aerobics and Nia.

Strength Training

Strength training exercise three days per week is ideal, but it should be done a minimum of two days per week. We suggest taking our Strength Training, Strength and Balance, or Seated Strength Stretch and Relax classes.

Flexibility Training

Stretching is important to your muscles and connective tissue, so we recommend that you do stretching exercises at least three days a week - every day would be ideal. Some of our classes that help with flexibility training are Yoga and Pilates.

Balance Training

People don't realize how important balance training is to performing every day activities until it's gone. We encourage people to include balance training in their workout routine. Our Yoga, Tai Chi and Strength and Balance classes will help you work on your balance.

Finding Time to Exercise

There are ways to make time to exercise and still get everything else done.

- **Prioritize** - treat exercise as you would any other crucial appointment
- **Add it to your calendar** - you'll be more likely to follow through
- **Remember the benefits** - exercise is vital to your continued good health; some of the benefits are:
 - Weight maintenance and loss
 - Improved muscle tone and strength and increased bone strength
 - Enhanced mood, improved psychological well-being, and decreased depression and anxiety
 - Reduced risk of many serious diseases and conditions, including heart disease, diabetes, cancer and Alzheimer's
 - Improved sleep
 - Increased odds of a longer, healthier life
- **Make a commitment to yourself and those who love you** - remember that you have to take care of yourself to take care of others

- **Set an example for your children** - they will learn from your example and start a lifetime of healthy habits

Try to think of exercise as something nourishment for your body, mind and soul. It's something you need to thrive, just as you need food, water and sunshine. Although you may be feeling fine now without proper exercise, if you start taking care of yourself, you'll feel better now and well into the future.