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## HEALTH BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL FITNESS

Regular activity has a number of proven, positive health effects, especially on heart health. Vigorous exercise strengthens the heart as a pump, making it a larger, more efficient muscle. Even moderate activity can boost HDL ("good") cholesterol, aid the circulatory system, and lower blood pressure and blood fats. All these effects translate into reduced risk for heart disease, heart attack, and stroke.

Exercise can also offer other benefits, including strengthened muscles, increased flexibility, and stronger bones, which can help ward off the bone-thinning condition called osteoporosis. Regular activity also promises mental-health benefits, like relieving stress and anxiety. It can help you sleep better and renew your energy. If exercise could be bottled, it would be a best-selling potion at the local pharmacy.

### ACTIVITY IS FOR EVERYONE

Virtually everyone can get health benefits from activity. But every few years, surveys confirm the well-known fact that most people aren't active enough. Unfortunately, we pay for it. The American Heart Association attributes about 250,000 deaths a year in the US - about 12 percent of total deaths - to lack of regular physical activity.



The reasons for inactivity aren't hard to figure out. Most of us have jobs where we sit most of the time, so chances are limited to be physically active at work. We also rely heavily on modern, labor-saving devices - cars, appliances, and power tools - to spare us manual effort. But there's another reason why many people, especially the overweight, avoid activity. Check out the firm, supple bodies shown exercising on television or on magazine covers. They give the impression that exercise is sweaty, strenuous work best reserved for the young, super-fit, and athletic. But the latest research is proving that picture false: Benefits can be gained even from low-intensity activity, like gardening.



Eat Right



Exercise



Don't Smoke!



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