

Y Not Personalized Fitness

Program Components

Cardiovascular Fitness

Cardiovascular fitness is the cornerstone of any fitness program. These aerobic workouts burn fat, increase the flow of oxygen to working muscle and vital organs, reduce stress, and aid in the prevention of heart attacks and many other degenerative diseases.

Cardiovascular fitness can be achieved through any activity that involves continuous, rhythmic movement of large muscle groups at intensity sufficient to elevate the heart rate to approximately 50% - 85% of your estimated maximal heart rate for prescribed lengths of time. This should be done from three to seven times per week. The intensity, duration, and frequency will be defined according to the activity, your initial fitness level and your rate of progress.

The workout follows the same basic pattern whether you choose running, cycling, swimming, rowing, aerobic dance, cross country skiing, or some other form of aerobic activity. Initially, you will warm up by doing the activity at a low level for 5 to 10 minutes. Following the warm up, you will workout in your target heart rate range for an additional 15 to 60 minutes. The workout will end with a cool down; your heart rate should drop below 120 beats per minute. Then, while the muscles are still warm and distensible, you will stretch the appropriate muscles. These stretches will not only promote flexibility, but also will decrease muscle soreness and reduce the risk of injury.

Resistance Training

Contrary to popular belief, resistance training is not a mindless, unfocused activity. When performed correctly, it is a concentrated, focused, aesthetic effort. Resistance training, in fact, can be perceived as a true art form using the body as it's canvas.

Many people are reluctant to train with weights because they mistakenly believe that toned muscle will turn to fat if they stop their program. This is simply untrue! Just as an example, a broken leg will atrophy while in a cast, a muscle that is not worked will shrink, not turn to fat. Others don't want to lift weights because they are afraid of bulking up and looking muscle bound. The average person, especially women, will never look overdeveloped because Mother Nature's hormonal balances prevent such things. A well-structured strength-training program will help you accomplish the look you wish to achieve, nothing more, nothing less!

We will develop such a program. You will learn to concentrate, isolate muscle groups, and appreciate the changes in your body. Michelangelo used to say that "inside every piece of marble was a statue waiting to be uncovered. You will feel the same way about you own body, as it begins to take the shape it was meant to have. Before long, you will give it the same due that you would any other valuable work of art.

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Flexibility

Like many other aspects of fitness, flexibility can be misunderstood and pursued improperly. Although people know that they should stretch, and do so with the best of intentions, they sometimes stretch incorrectly and occasionally injure themselves.

While people often blame running or some other activity for their back problems, for instance, the real culprit may be the stretches they do before the activity. Similarly, hard to hold stretches where joints are forced beyond their normal range of motion, do not always result in increased flexibility, but can cause damage and injury.

You will learn never to move a joint further than you can actively control it. Otherwise you may be overstretching muscles and ligaments around the joint, which may prove to be more harmful than never having stretched at all. To avoid these types of injuries, we will develop a dynamic flexibility program that will allow you to increase your range of motion with safe, controlled stretches. To further our efforts at injury prevention, we will strengthen the muscles surrounding the joints, using resistance exercise, which will naturally increase your dynamic range of motion.

Stretching cold muscles is not effective for warming up for another activity, or for increasing flexibility. We will prepare the body for an upcoming session by performing an abbreviated, low-level aerobic activity. Stretching is performed most effectively when the joints have been limbered and the muscles are warm.

When done correctly, stretched will feel good. You need to focus on the muscles being stretched, and keep the stretch relaxed and sustained. Spend approximately 15 to 60 seconds in each stretch, making sure not to bounce! Instead, take the stretch to a point where you feel mild tension, and then relax as you hold the stretch. Once you feel comfortable, move a fraction of an inch further until you can again feel mild tension. If that tension does not diminish, ease off slightly until it does. During the stretch, make sure that your breathing is slow, rhythmic and controlled.

Be aware of what is called the stretch reflex, a protective mechanism of your muscles. Whenever you stretch your muscle fibers too far, either by bouncing or overstretching, a nerve reflex sends a signal to the muscles to shorten or contract. This instinctive tightening of the muscle helps prevent injury, but also prevents elongation of the muscle, so bouncing becomes counterproductive to the stretch you are trying to achieve.

Pay attention to pain, because overstretching can result in microscopic fiber tears and sore muscles. These tears lead to the formation of scar tissue in the muscle and connective tissue, and a resulting loss of elasticity. When done correctly, stretching is not painful. Listen to your body. Pain is an indication that something is wrong. Remember there is gain without pain!