DR RICK’S TIPS ON BEING ACTIVE

Some people think you have to pound the pavement or work out at the gym to get any benefit from physical activity. But being active doesn't have to mean no pain - no gain, nor does it have to be something extra to fit in to your life. There are many ways of incorporating more movement into your daily living, such as walking to the shop or taking the stairs. Or you might like to take up an activity such as dance, yoga or Tai Chi, which are all enjoyable ways of working your muscles.

Remember that you only need a total of 30 minutes of moderate physical activity each day (eg by putting together 3 lots of 10 minutes), to improve your health.

Facts:

- In the process of becoming more active, many people start to feel better about their bodies in a range of ways (eg due to feeling stronger, more flexible, fit or confident), while appearance or weight can become less important.
- Poor body image can make people prone to over-exercise (in a bid to change their body quickly) or to avoid exercising (especially when it involves exposing their bodies in public).
- Women who exercise primarily for weight or appearance concerns tend to have a poorer body image.
- The desire to be bigger or more muscular can prompt over-exercising and/or steroid use in men.

6 Top Tips:

- Remember that fit and healthy people come in a diverse range of body shapes and sizes.
- Be physically active to improve your overall health and well-being rather than only to change your weight or shape.
- Set realistic, flexible, sustainable and enjoyable goals which are based on your behaviours rather than your body (eg aim to walk 3 times a week, rather than aim to lose 3 kilos a week).
- Don't compare your physique, fitness or flexibility with others - go at your own pace, not someone else's.
- Remember that every body responds differently to physical activity depending on factors such as age, weight and gender.
- No matter what your physique, your body will always derive some benefit from being active.

12 Top Benefits of being more physically active:

- Helping you enjoy your body for what it can do, not just what it looks like.
- Making daily tasks (eg walking up stairs) a lot easier.
- Giving you time out from the demands of life.
- Improving your strength, fitness, physical health and confidence which helps you to achieve what you want to in life.
- Physical activity can help with concentration and mental alertness.
- Physical activity can help us become more aware of the feelings of hunger or fullness.
• Opening up a range of social and recreational activities which wouldn't otherwise be available (e.g., bush walking, social tennis, walking from the car to a sporting event). If we can find a physical activity that we enjoy, it can become a very pleasant part of life.
• Helping you to manage stress. Setting aside this time can be very nurturing for body and mind.
• Boosting your mood and energy levels.
• Increasing your flexibility and mobility.
• Helping you sleep more soundly.
• Improving metabolic rate and helps prevent weight gain. Physical activity can increase basal metabolic rate for a considerable time after the actual activity finishes. And lean body mass can replace some of the fat, which has been created through repeated dieting.

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