



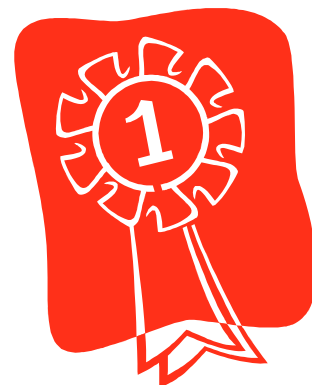
CU SPORTS MEDICINE

Exercise and Women
An Unbeatable Combination!

We all know that exercise is supposed to be good for us. But regular exercise has unique importance in the lives of women. If we could put the benefits of exercise in a little pill, we'd be popping 'em every day!

Regular physical activity has been associated with the following benefits:

- Increases your energy.
- Reduces the risk of developing cardiovascular disease, the leading cause of death in women.
- Reduces the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes (non-insulin dependent). This is a new American health epidemic associated with obesity and a sedentary lifestyle.
- Prevents weight gain, helps with weight loss, and is critical in keeping the fat off once you've lost it!
- Lowers the incidence or progression of colon cancer and may help prevent other types of cancer as well.
- Lowers the risk of osteoporosis. Exercise helps build bone or slows bone loss.
- Enhances your overall mood and feelings of well-being.
- Improves your sleep patterns.
- Increases your stamina, strength, and flexibility. This allows you to perform a variety of work, home, and recreational activities.
- Improves your balance, which prevents falls and helps you to remain an independent senior citizen!
- Can decrease the symptoms of osteoarthritis if performed properly.
- Helps you live longer (really!).
- Provides fun, and helps your confidence, camaraderie, pride, relaxation, sense of achievement and more...



Personalize Your Fitness Plan

Various types of exercise promote different changes in the body. It is helpful to be clear about the benefits associated with different kinds of activity. This will help you achieve the most meaningful and effective results. Use the following information to help you select the type of exercise that will give you the greatest health rewards based on your individual health risks and concerns.

Do you want to...

Lose Fat Weight or Stay Slim?

- Both low and high-intensity *cardiovascular exercise* help you burn calories. Choose options that work with your body and put a smile on your face: walking, cycling, jogging, swimming, rowing, aerobics classes, dancing... Beginners should start **slowly** and gradually include a variety of activities into their plan. If you're carrying lots of extra weight, at first avoid high impact activities. Work your way up to exercising harder, longer, or more frequently. Alternate long easy-paced workouts with shorter, more challenging exercise sessions. **Build a habit of activity.**
- *Strength training* can boost your metabolism by building and maintaining muscle. This helps you burn fat even while you're sleeping! Strong muscles also enable you to exercise without getting hurt.

Improve Bone Health?

- *Weight-bearing Exercise*
Consider such things as walking, jogging, dancing, tennis, soccer, or basketball. Vigorous and high-impact activities stimulate greater bone strength. These also require better overall fitness and bone health to be performed safely. Check with your doctor about the best options for you.
- *Strength Training*
Strong muscles build strong bones. Gradually develop a program that challenges all the muscles in your body: hips, legs, trunk, shoulders, and arms. You can use dumbbells, weight machines, exercise bands, calisthenics, or Pilates™. Progress to free weights so your body has to work harder to stabilize and balance itself. Learn and practice good posture during exercise.

Decrease Risk of Heart Disease, High Blood Pressure, and Diabetes?

- Frequent moderate-intensity *aerobic exercise* is a great way to improve your cardiovascular health. For example, gradually build up to walking 2 miles briskly (in about 30 minutes) just about every day.
- Ask a fitness professional about *circuit weight-training*. This type of exercise can increase both strength and stamina **in the same workout** and improve your overall health.

Look like Cindy Crawford?

Forget it! You're you. She's a 5'9" model with different genes and different jeans! Your goal should be like one of those U.S. Armed Forces commercials: "Be all that you can be!" In other words: **Work with what you've got to be as healthy as possible.** And remember, fitness is not just about how you look. It's about how you feel, how you carry yourself, and what your body can do for you.

Increase Your Energy Level?

- You'd think that exercise would make you even more tired. But ask anybody who exercises regularly. You get MORE ENERGY and sleep better if you're physically active. Try exercising earlier in the day so mental fatigue or a crazy schedule doesn't derail your program.
- *Aerobics, strength training, and lots of recreational activities* will give you an energy boost. Just make sure you provide your body with adequate nutrition and give yourself at least one rest day each week.

Reduce Low Back Pain?

- Ask your doctor to refer you to a physical therapist who can teach you *strengthening, stretching, and posture exercises* to help reduce the stress on your back. Then keep up these exercises! Or transition to a gym program that will continue to improve your overall core strength and flexibility.
- Perform regular *low-impact aerobic exercise* such as walking or swimming. This will increase blood flow to the spine and help you control your weight to reduce stress on the back.

Continue to be Active and Independent as you Get Older?

- As we age, we experience gradual losses of strength, flexibility and stamina. Yet studies show that smart, *regular physical training* will slow down these losses and keep you feeling and performing younger!
- Always warm-up prior to activity. Try viniyoga or restorative yoga, Pilates™, tai chi, or stretching to maintain your flexibility and improve your body awareness. **Get in shape to play** sports. Start low and go slow! Modify sports activities if necessary or explore new opportunities for exercise.



Adapted from information developed by the Woman's Sports Medicine Center, Hospital for Special Surgery, New York. 2003, University of Colorado Hospital, Denver