Fit Facts

The FITT Principle

Back in December we began this two-part series and discussed the 3 main types of exercises you should be doing: cardiovascular, strength training and stretching. This month we’re discussing the FITT principle

The FITT principle (frequency, intensity, time [duration] and type) is a process of putting together an efficient workout plan for being active.

Frequency is how often you’re active during a week. Keeping this in mind, you should be active no less than 3 days per week (according to the CDC) however you should try to be active on most days of the week. You should also increase the frequency slowly to avoid injury or soreness.

Intensity refers to how hard your exercise or activity is and you’ll either use your target heart rate zone for cardio work or amount of weight lifted, repetitions completed and sets when strength training to determine the intensity. The CDC also recommends that you exercise at least at a moderate intensity, and you can obtain this by HR (should be around 60-75% of your maximum heart rate), perceived exertion and the talk test (some difficulty to talk while exercising). Try to complete eight to twelve reps with one to three sets when doing strength training. For cardio you’ll subtract the persons age from 220. Example to get MHR and THR zone for 25-year-old in the 60-75% zone. Example calculation (220-25=195 MHR) and the zone (195x0.60= 117 and 195x0.75=~146.25). For this 25-year-old example the MHR is 195 and THR zone is 117-146.

With time it is recommended that you’re active for at least 150 minutes at a moderate intensity or 75 minutes of high intensity each week. This can be broken down into a 30-minute session, a 45-minute session or even a 15-minute intense exercise session. Make every minute count!

The last item is type and this can be things such as walking, running, aerobic classes, cycling for cardio. Strength training would be using free weights or weight machines such as bicep curls, bench press or leg press for example as well as bodyweight to include pullups, sit-ups or squats.

Although we’ve been discussing the cardio and strength training portion of your fitness routine, don’t forget the stretching which should be done at least before and after your routine for at least five minutes.

Adding more days or time to your routine is fine if you do it gradually and make sure you’re listening to your body, you’re not having injuries, you’re not over doing it and you’re giving your body the required rest it needs. Make changes or switch things up to avoid being bored with your routine. For instance, if you usually walk on the treadmill for 45 minutes for cardio, how about going for a walk outside if the weather is nice or use the cycling bike. Switch the days if you ALWAYS do something on the same day each week to keep the schedule fresh. The exercise possibilities are endless and are waiting to be added to your routine!