



## ***Empowering Patients: Healthy Physical Activity***

***We were made to move.  
When we don't, our health suffers. When we do, we thrive!***

### **7 BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

1. **Decreases your risks** for heart disease, stroke, diabetes, high blood pressure and cancer.

*Exercise plays an important role in managing and improving chronic health conditions.*

2. **Prevents weight gain**– complementing healthy nutrition – helps you maintain a healthy weight.
3. **Improves the fitness of your heart, lungs and muscles.** Physical activity conditions your body to function better, making everyday activities easier.
4. **Prevents falls and improves cognition.** When your limbs, eyes and brain are accustomed to movement, your balance, agility and ability to react improve. When blood flows better throughout your body, it also provides better circulation to your brain. **A healthy body promotes a healthy brain.**
5. **Weight bearing exercise** (e.g. walking, hiking, weight training) **helps maintain bone density**, reducing your risks for osteoporosis and fractures.
6. **Improves sleep.** Although vigorous exercise just before bed may be too stimulating, activity earlier in the day can improve the quality of your sleep.
7. **Improves emotional wellbeing** by decreasing stress hormones, such as cortisol, and raising endorphins, natural painkillers. Exercise can raise your confidence and sense of accomplishment.

8. There are **social benefits** to activities such as yoga, zumba, dance and spin classes, ballroom and line dancing, Tai Chi, weight training, running clubs, lap swimming, badminton, ping pong, walking groups and hiking.

### **PHYSICAL LITERACY: The 7 Fundamental Movement Skills**

These are the essential sports skills taught to children from birth and throughout their school years, but each remains relevant throughout your lifetime.

1. **Running** - You may need to run without falling if being pursued, trying to retrieve a purse, escaping a burning building, chasing your newspaper down the street or avoiding a collision with a fast-moving object.
2. **Jumping** - You have to be able to do this without tripping to avoid falling into a puddle or stepping on the droppings of dogs (or horses in Victoria).
3. **Striking (as with a racquet)** - To swat a mosquito with a flyswatter.
4. **Kicking** - To kick out the window of a burning or sinking bus or car. To defend yourself from an attacker.
5. **Throwing** - When you don't want to walk to the trash can. **A faster way to move your laundry.**
6. **Catching** - To catch the keys someone tosses you OR a dish before it crashes on the floor.
7. **Agility, Balance & Coordination** - To change your own clothes, shower and bathe,



cook, shop and drive. To avoid falls and fractures. This is especially important for the man who does all his shopping at the mall on Christmas Eve.

### **The 6 Aspects OF PHYSICAL FUNCTION**

*(from the textbook, "Therapeutic Exercise" by Carolyn Kisner and Lynn Allen Colby)*

1. **CARDIOPULMONARY FITNESS:**  
**Endurance** *housecleaning, yard work, walking, laundry, cooking, and shopping.*
2. **FLEXIBILITY: The Ability to Move Freely**  
*picking up the paper, reaching the top shelf, changing, bathing, and foot care.*
3. **COORDINATION: Smooth, efficient Movement**  
*cooking, dusting, eating, drinking, changing, driving, and grocery shopping.*
4. **STABILITY: Joint Stability, Muscle Balance**  
*putting on socks, shoes & support stockings, getting into the tub, and bathing.*
5. **DYNAMIC BALANCE: Maintaining Balance in Action**  
*walking at home & outdoors, shopping, bathing, ladders, and stairs.*
6. **MUSCLE PERFORMANCE: Strength, Power and Endurance**  
*driving, taking out the trash/recycling, vacuuming, mowing the lawn, raking leaves, moving tables and chairs, sweeping, dusting, and grocery shopping.*

### **TOYS EVERY GROWNUP SHOULD OWN (and play with regularly)**

1. **A skipping rope; sidewalk chalk for hopscotch:** to practice balance and jumping.
2. **A soft rubber ball:** to kick, dribble, bounce, catch and throw outdoors.
3. **A foam ball:** to toss and catch indoors.
4. **Badminton racquets and shuttlecocks:** to practice striking and promote agility, balance and coordination.

### **FITTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY INTO EVERY DAY**

*Look for simple ways to increase your level of physical activity.*

1. Walk or bike to school or work.
2. Get off the bus a few blocks further from your destination.
3. Buy a bright, new umbrella and raincoat, embrace the rain and do an extra walk each day.
4. Go hands-free at home and walk while you talk on the phone.
5. Dance to your favourite music.
6. Limit your screen time (in front of the television or computer).
7. Stretch and exercise while you watch your favourite shows.
8. Check out the local pool, gym and community centre. There's sure to be something you'll enjoy learning and doing.

### **REDUCING RISK WITH EXERCISE**

1. **Talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise program** if your current workout is moving from couch to fridge, you're over 40, at risk for heart disease or have a chronic health condition (such as diabetes, heart failure, asthma, chronic bronchitis or arterial disease).
2. **If you have osteoarthritis, choose activities that do not harm your joints** (e.g. with degenerative arthritis of the knees and hips, avoid running. Swimming would be a better choice).
3. **To reduce injuries:**
  - a. *start at a lower intensity,*
  - b. *exercise in a safe environment,*
  - c. *get expert assistance and instruction, and*
  - d. *use proper equipment* (e.g. helmets for cycling, appropriate footwear).

4. **Avoid dehydration** by drinking adequate fluids.
5. **Avoid OVER exercise.** Watch out for the signs of over exercise:
  - a. excessive weight loss,
  - b. constant muscle soreness and tiredness,
  - c. recurrent injuries,
  - d. recurrent infections, chronic fatigue, and
  - e. neglect of work, school, friends and loved ones.
6. **Balance activity** with rest and healthy nutrition.

### **KEYS TO ACHIEVING YOUR GOALS**

- **Choose Wisely.** A goal that matters to you.
- **Visualize** yourself having achieved your goal, reprogramming your subconscious mind and priming the pump for success.
- **Break it down** from supersized into manageable morsels. You'll gain confidence with early wins.
- **Write down the details.**

#### **SMARTTEST goals:**

- **Specific:** What will you do? Where?
- **Measurable:** How much? How long?
- **Achievable:** Realistic and do-able.
- **Relevant:** Important to you, your values and your health.
- **Time Frame:** When will you start? When will you finish?
- **Evaluate:** How did you do? What did you learn?
- **Stepping Forward:** What will you do next? What will you do differently?
- **Together:** Who will you work with? Who will you share with?

- **Anticipate** and prepare for roadblocks.
- **Enlist support.** Consult with your family doctor. Choose a coach or teammate: your partner, friend or neighbor.

### **THE 4 FOUNDATIONS OF SELF-CARE**

- **What you eat** (what you put into your body).
- **What you do** (physical activity and rest).
- **How you feel** (emotional wellbeing).
- **How you connect** (healthy relationships).

*More articles on Empowering Patients can be found at [FETCH \(For Everything That's Community Health\) sc.fetchbc.ca](http://sc.fetchbc.ca)*

**Note:** This article was written by Dr. Davidicus Wong and does not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Sunshine Coast Division of Family Practice

***Please share this information with your family, friends and anyone else who may find it helpful.***

***Together we'll create a healthier community and a healthier future.***