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#53 RANDY GRADISHAR

HEALTHY WEALTHY & WISE

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An important key to an enjoyable and invigorating life is physical exercise.

Following are some thoughts on how important exercise is to a healthy, rewarding and productive life:

“Most everyone knows that exercise is good for you, yet few understand *how good* it really is... working out helps burn calories, enhance weight loss and strengthen muscles... exercise has been scientifically shown to make us more intelligent, happier, and more successful.” *Transformation*, by Bill Phillips.

“Exercise can be used like a vaccine to prevent disease and a medication to treat it...if there were a drug with the same benefits as working out, it would instantly be the standard of care.” *Robert Sallis, MD, American College of Sports Medicine.*

“Consistent exercise can double survival rates of breast cancer patients...walking the equivalent of 3-5 hours per week at a moderate pace cut the risk of dying in half compared to the sedentary women...exercise significantly strengthens the body’s immune system; women who exer-

cise regularly can expect a 30% reduction in developing breast cancer.” *Jama, 2005 and Harvard Medical School.*

The more active you are, the better your heart works. You’re less likely to get coronary artery disease, high blood pressure or Type 2 diabetes. If you already have any of these problems, staying active may help you to take better control over them, feel better, and live longer with an improved quality of life.



Even if you have chronic heart failure problems, and beginning stages of osteoporosis, exercise can reduce debilitating symptoms.

Many, many studies, including studies by researchers at Duke University, make it clear that exercise plays an

important role in promoting sound mental health and emotional well-being. This is true for men and women of all ages.

Stress is a physical, mental, and emotional response to life’s changes and demands. Stress is experienced in levels. Low levels may not be noticeable at all. Occasional, moderate stress can be positive and challenge us to act in creative and resourceful ways. High

levels can be harmful, leading to chronic, severe disease.

OUR CHILDREN

“A study involving 954,000 students grades 5,7 and 9, showed that the most healthy kids (ones who scored highest on fitness tests and had lower levels of body fat) did twice as well on aptitude exams in reading and mathematics compared to the least fit kids.”

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.

“More physical fitness for students is a cure for not only unhealthy weight gain, but also the kids’ academic performance.” *Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain*, by Harvard professor John Ratey, M.D.

Exercise/fitness burns more calories even at rest, and it allows your child/teenager to exercise harder without as much work. Being more fit can help kids sleep better, handle stress better, strengthen self-esteem and keep their mind sharp.

ANOTHER STUDY

Over a 9-year span, 3,298 men and women with an approximate age of 70 years were **63% less likely** to suffer a stroke due to regular, vigorous exercise (tennis, jogging, biking, swimming and weight lifting.) *Neurology Journal* study.

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Unfortunately, more than 80 million U.S. adults do not do any voluntary exercise, placing the United States last on the list of the health of modern countries. *Archives of Internal Medicine*. Amazingly, in 2009 over \$147 billion was spent taking care of U.S. citizens who did not take care of themselves.

WHAT IS FITNESS

Fitness simply means being able to perform physical activity. It also means having the energy and strength to feel *as good as possible*. Getting more fit, even a little bit, will improve your health; per experts quoted above.

You do not have to be an athlete to be fit. Athletes reach a very high level of fitness. However, people who take brisk half-hour walks everyday reach a good level of fitness. That's the goal after all, and is not as hard to achieve as some would have you believe.

Even people who cannot do much can work toward some level of fitness that helps them feel better and have more energy. For example, playing with your children or grandchildren, leisurely walks, gardening and simple household chores provide a measure of exercise and a measure of fitness.

Making small changes in your weekly schedule to incorporate 30 minutes of exercise three times weekly will improve your overall fitness—physically, intellectually, mentally and emotionally.

A CONSISTENT HABIT

Fit individuals are “fit” because exercise and being active has become a *habit*. When something

becomes a habit, we don't think about it—we just do it, like brushing our teeth. When something becomes a habit, like regular exercise, it is difficult to break; it becomes engrained.

Experts say that it takes about three months of repetition to form a habit. For some it may take longer, but on average 3 months of *consistent*, regular exercise will become a life-long habit you'll never regret. Consistency is *invaluable* for overall good health. To maintain consistency develop and follow a specific exercise program. Don't let reasons such as lack of time or bad weather compromise consistency. Maintaining a specific program and a specific time is very important to building a consistent habit. For some, fitness classes or groups help to maintain consistency. Healthy peer pressure to show up and participate supports consistency.

AN EXERCISE PLAN

A good exercise program begins with a plan. The plan should consist of stretching, activities that increase your heart rate (aerobic exercise), and strength building (free weights, or universal weights).

Stretching prior to working out is very important; minimizes muscle pulls, and makes the workout more enjoyable. To improve your aerobic power, you do not need to submit yourself to *strenuous* exercise. An intensity of exercise called “conversational exercise” (where you can comfortably have a conversation while you are exercising) is very effective to improve one's “endurance intensity.”

If you're unsure of your RPE (Rate of Perceived Exertion) check

with your family physician to learn your target heart rate - it varies for each individual. How long each exercise session lasts depends on the intensity of the exercise.

Of course, the higher your exercise intensity, the lower your exercise duration may be because of fatigue. Gradually increase the duration of your exercise as your aerobic power increases. If you're just beginning, try to exercise for at least 10 minutes at a time, then take a short rest, then exercise for another 10 minutes.

In addition, you will get the most improvement from exercise by using your large muscle groups, such as walking, jogging, bicycling, swimming, or rowing. Again, choose something you enjoy, it will help being consistent. Drink plenty of water before, during, and after you exercise. A well-planned exercise program, with consistency, will offer you a more enjoyable and healthy life...you deserve it!

Randy Gradishar

Email: [rgradishar@](mailto:rgradishar@presidentialbrokerage.com)

presidentialbrokerage.com

PRESIDENTIAL
BROKERAGE, INC.

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www.presidentialbrokerage.com

Denver: 303-694-1600

Colorado Springs: 719-278-9711

San Diego: 858-408-4900

Duluth: 218-625-8740