**Introduction:**

Exercise is key to good health. But we tend to limit ourselves to one or two types of activity. "People do what they enjoy, or what feels the most effective, so some aspects of exercise and fitness are ignored," says Rachel Wilson, a physical therapist at Harvard-affiliated Brigham and Women's Hospital. In reality, we should all be doing aerobics, stretching, strengthening, and balance exercises.

The 4 most important types of exercise

1**. Aerobic exercise**

Aerobic exercise is any type of cardiovascular conditioning. Aerobic exercise (also known as cardio) is physical exercise of low to high intensity that depends primarily on the aerobic energy-generating process.. You probably know it as “cardio.” By definition, aerobic exercise means “with oxygen.” Your breathing and heart rate will increase during aerobic activities.it is designed to be low-intensity enough so that all carbohydrates are aerobically turned into energy.

Aerobic exercise, which speeds up your heart rate and breathing, is important for many body functions. It gives your heart and lungs a workout and increases endurance. "If you're too winded to walk up a flight of stairs, that's a good indicator that you need more aerobic exercise to help condition your heart and lungs, and get enough blood to your muscles to help them work efficiently," says Wilson.

Aerobic exercise also helps relax blood vessel walls, lower blood pressure, burn body fat, lower blood sugar levels, reduce inflammation, boost mood, and raise "good" HDL cholesterol. Combined with weight loss, it can lower "bad" LDL cholesterol levels, too. Over the long term, aerobic exercise reduces your risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, breast and colon cancer, depression, and falls.

For most healthy adults, the Department of Health and Human Services recommends: At least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity a week, or a combination of moderate and vigorous activity. The guidelines suggest that you spread this exercise throughout the week.Examples of aerobic exercises include cardio machines, spinning, running, swimming, walking, hiking, aerobics classes, dancing, cross country skiing, and kickboxing. There are many other types. Aerobic exercises can become anaerobic exercises if performed at a level of intensity that is too high.

Aerobic versus anaerobic exercise

Aerobic exercise and fitness can be contrasted with anaerobic exercise, of which strength training and short-distance running are the most salient examples. The two types of exercise differ by the duration and intensity of muscular contractions involved, as well as by how energy is generated within the muscle.

New research on the endocrine functions of contracting muscles has shown that both aerobic and anaerobic exercise promote the secretion of myokines, with attendant benefits including growth of new tissue, tissue repair, and various anti-inflammatory functions, which in turn reduce the risk of developing various inflammatory diseases. Myokine secretion in turn is dependent on the amount of muscle contracted, and the duration and intensity of contraction. As such, both types of exercise produce endocrine benefits.

**2. Strength training**

As we age, we lose muscle mass. Strength training builds it back. "Regular strength training will help you feel more confident and capable of daily tasks like carrying groceries, gardening, and lifting heavier objects around the house. Strength training will also help you stand up from a chair, get up off the floor, and go up stairs," says Wilson.

Strengthening your muscles not only makes you stronger, but also stimulates bone growth, lowers blood sugar, assists with weight control, improves balance and posture, and reduces stress and pain in the lower back and joints.

A physical therapist can design a strength training program that you can do two to three times a week at a gym, at home, or at work. It will likely include body weight exercises like squats, push-ups, and lunges, and exercises involving resistance from a weight, a band, or a weight machine.

"Remember, it's important to feel some muscle fatigue at the end of the exercise to make sure you are working or training the muscle group effectively," Wilson says.

push-ups, sit-ups and squats.Lifting weights

**3. Stretching**

Stretching helps maintain flexibility. We often overlook that in youth, when our muscles are healthier. But aging leads to a loss of flexibility in the muscles and tendons. Muscles shorten and don't function properly. That increases the risk for muscle cramps and pain, muscle damage, strains, joint pain, and falling, and it also makes it tough to get through daily activities, such as bending down to tie your shoes.Likewise, stretching the muscles routinely makes them longer and more flexible, which increases your range of motion and reduces pain and the risk for injury.Aim for a program of stretching every day or at least three or four times per week.Warm up your muscles first, with a few minutes of dynamic stretches—repetitive motion such as marching in place or arm circles. That gets blood and oxygen to muscles, and makes them amenable to change.

Then perform static stretches (holding a stretch position for up to 60 seconds) for the calves, the hamstrings, hip flexors, quadriceps, and the muscles of the shoulders, neck, and lower back.

"However, don't push a stretch into the painful range. That tightens the muscle and is counterproductive," says Wilson.

**4. Balance exercises**

Improving your balance makes you feel steadier on your feet and helps prevent falls. It's especially important as we get older, when the systems that help us maintain balance—our vision, our inner ear, and our leg muscles and joints—tend to break down. "The good news is that training your balance can help prevent and reverse these losses," says Wilson.

Typical balance exercises include standing on one foot or walking heel to toe, with your eyes open or closed. The physical therapist may also have you focus on joint flexibility, walking on uneven surfaces, and strengthening leg muscles with exercises such as squats and leg lifts. Get the proper training before attempting any of these exercises at home.

**Exercise Tips for Beginners**

Workout rules to help when you're starting out

**Find someone to workout with:**

Grab yourself a friend to workout with! This is one of the best ways to stay on track with a new program. If you’re both beginners, you have someone to encourage and support you at each stage, because they know exactly what you’re going through. If they’re no longer a beginner, they can share some of their tips for beating those inevitable hurdles in your fitness journey. **Always stay hydrated**

Our bodies don’t function well without water. It’s a very simple fact. And once you begin working out and sweating more, you need to keep up the fluids to ensure your muscles don’t become fatigued too quickly. Listen to your body — and if you find it hard to drink plain water, try some of these tips for staying hydrated instead!

**Don’t skip rest day**

We get it, you want to results as soon as possible. But skipping rest day may actually end up having negative impacts on your body, and on your results. Each time you complete a workout, you’re causing your body stress and creating micro-tears in your muscles. Your body then repairs itself, adapts and becomes stronger. However, if you start skipping your rest days, you put yourself at risk of turning micro-tears into something bigger. Give yourself time to rest and recover between workouts so that your body can heal.

**Focus on your form**

This can be one of the hardest parts of new fitness programs: getting the exercises right. Performing an exercise incorrectly means you may not be efficiently working your muscles, and you may be putting yourself at risk of an injury. Check out the video tutorials in the app to see how they should be done, or ask a trainer at the gym for help.

**Keep records**

If you really want to change your lifestyle when you begin any new workout program, it means changing behaviours. Keeping records can really help you to identify healthy habits that you want to improve on, or behaviours that you want to stop altogether. Make some notes throughout your fitness journey. Track how often you worked out, what you did and how you felt after it. Many women notice changes in their energy levels and their moods long before physical changes, and that can be fantastic encouragement to keep working hard and improving. Once you form a habit around exercise and healthy living, it can become part of your life!Good nutrition can help your body perform better and recover faster after each workout.Optimal nutrient intake prior to exercise will not only help you maximize your performance but also minimize muscle damage Fueling your body with the right nutrients prior to exercise will give you the energy and strength you need to perform better.

Each macronutrient has a specific role before a workout. However, the ratio in which you need to consume them varies by the individual and type of exercise.In general, eating some combination of protein and carbohydrates before a workout to sustain energy and build muscle is advised, says Kate Patton, RD, who specializes in sports nutrition at Cleveland Clinic in Ohio. Foods with a high amount of fat or fiber, on the other hand (think broccoli or a grilled cheese sandwich), should be avoided, as they may cause stomach upset and cramping.

**Some Examples of Pre-Workout Meals**

Which foods and how much to eat depends on the type, duration and intensity of the workout.

A good rule of thumb is to eat a mixture of carbs and protein prior to exercise.

If you eat fat with your pre-workout meal, then it should be consumed at least a few hours before your workout .

Here are some examples of balanced pre-workout meals:

**If Your Workout Starts Within 2–3 Hours or More**

* Sandwich on whole-grain bread, lean protein and a side salad
* Egg omelet and whole-grain toast and a cup of fruit
* Lean protein, brown rice and roasted vegetables

**If Your Workout Starts Within 2 Hours**

* Protein smoothie made with milk, protein powder, banana and mixed berries
* Whole-grain cereal and milk
* A cup of oatmeal topped with banana and sliced almonds
* Natural almond butter and fruit preserve sandwich on whole-grain bread

**If Your Workout Starts Within an Hour or Less**

* Greek yogurt and fruit
* Nutrition bar with protein and wholesome ingredients
* A piece of fruit, such as a banana, orange or apple

Keep in mind that you don't need to eat many pre-workout meals at different times. Just choose one of these.

Supplements Can Also Be Useful Before Exercise.Supplement use is common in sports. These products may enhance performance, improve strength, increase lean body mass and reduce fatigue.

Below are some of the best pre-workout supplements.

***Beta-Alanine***

Beta-alanine is an amino acid that increases your muscle stores of carnosine. It has been shown to be most effective for short- and high-intensity exercises.It does this by increasing exercise capacity and muscle endurance while reducing fatigue.The recommended daily dose is 2–5 grams, of which at least 0.5 grams should be consumed prior to your workout

**Creatine**

Creatine is probably the most commonly used sports supplement.It has been shown to increase muscle mass, muscle fiber size and muscle strength and power, all while delaying fatigue.Even though it's beneficial to take creatine before a workout, it seems to be even more effective when taken after a workout.Taking 2–5 grams of creatine monohydrate per day is effective.

**Caffeine**

Among many other benefits, caffeine has been shown to improve performance, increase strength and power, help reduce feelings of fatigue and stimulate fat burning .

Caffeine can be consumed in coffee, tea and energy drinks, but it can also be found in pre-workout supplements and pills.It doesn't really matter how you consume it, as its effects on performance are usually the same.

Caffeine's peak effects are seen 90 minutes after consumption. However, it has been shown to be effective even when ingested 15–60 minutes prior to exercise.

**Pre-Workout Supplements**

Some people prefer products that contain a blend of the supplements mentioned above.

The combination of these ingredients may have synergistic effects and improve performance significantly.

Caffeine, creatine, beta-alanine, branched-chain amino acids, arginine and B vitamins are among the most commonly used ingredients in these products.These pre-workout supplements have been shown to increase work output, strength, endurance, anaerobic power, reaction time, focus and alertness

The particular dose depends on the product, but it's generally recommended to take them about 30–45 minutes before exercise.

**Hydration Is Also Crucial**

Your body needs water to function.

Good hydration has been shown to sustain and even enhance performance, while dehydration has been linked to significant decreases in performance

It's recommended to consume both water and sodium before exercise. This will improve fluid balance.

The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) recommends drinking 16–20 ounces (0.5–0.6 liters) of water at least four hours before exercise and 8–12 ounces (0.23–0.35 liters) of water 10–15 minutes before exercise (32Trusted Source).

Additionally, they recommend consuming a beverage that contains sodium to help retain fluids.

beverages before exercise to promote fluid balance and prevent excessive fluid loss.