



Cross Training & Overall Fitness

****Regular exercise can help you control your weight, reduce your risk of heart disease, and strengthen your bones and muscles. But if it's been awhile since you've exercised and you have health issues or concerns, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise routine.***

Cardiovascular activity, strength conditioning, and flexibility training create balance. These don't all have to be done at once, but doing each on a regular basis will result in balanced fitness.

- **Cardiovascular activity.** Start by doing an aerobic activity, like walking or running, for a sustained 20-30 minutes, four to five times a week. To ensure you're working at an optimum level, try the "talk test": Make sure you can carry on a basic level of conversation without being too winded. But if you can easily sing a song, you're not working hard enough.
- **Strength conditioning.** Start by doing one set of exercises targeting each of the major muscle groups. Begin using a weight or count at which you can comfortably perform the exercise eight to 12 times in a set. When you think you can handle more, gradually increase either the weight, the number of repetitions, or number of sets. To maximize the benefits, do strength training at least twice a week. Never work the same body part two days in a row.
- **Flexibility training.** The American College on Exercise recommends doing slow, sustained static stretches three to seven days per week. Each stretch should last 10-30 seconds.

Try to incorporate five or more of the exercises below into your workout at least two times a week (and work up to three days a week once you feel comfortable). Start with 8 to 12 repetitions. Work up to do 10 to 15 reps of each exercise for three or more sets.

Note: The list of exercises below is ordered according to body part: lower body, core, and upper body.

Air Squat

Start standing with feet just wider than hip-width apart, toes pointed slightly out, clasp hands at chest for balance. Send hips back and bend at knees to lower down as far as possible with chest lifted. Press through heels back up to starting position. Repeat for 10 to 15 reps.

Single-Leg Balance

Start standing with hands on hips. Shift weight to left leg and bring right knee up so hip, knee, and ankle form 90-degree angles. Hold this position for 30 to 60 seconds, then repeat on other leg.

Backward Lunge

Stand with feet together. Step right leg back, lowering down so both knees form a 90-degree angle, with right knee hovering just above the floor. Drive through left heel to stand up to starting position. Repeat on left side. Continue alternating for 10 to 15 reps per side.

Glute Bridge

Lie face-up, knees bent, and feet planted on the floor. Drive through heels, contracting the glutes to send hips toward the ceiling. Your body should form a straight line from shoulders to knees. Lower back down and repeat for 10 to 15 reps.

Straight-Leg Calf Raise

Stand with feet hip-width apart on the edge of a step or box, legs straight. Push through to come up to toes. Pause for a second, then lower heels back down and repeat for 10 to 15 reps.

Plank

Start on all fours, shoulders over wrists. Step feet back and engage glutes and thighs to keep legs straight. Body should form a straight line from shoulders to hips to heels. Think about pushing the ground away from you and pulling the belly button up toward the spine to keep back flat. Hold this position for 30 to 60 seconds.

Mountain Climber

Start in a high plank position, shoulders over wrists, core engaged so body forms a straight line from shoulders to hips to heels. Engage glutes and thighs to keep legs straight. Drive left knee in toward chest, then quickly step it back to plank position. Immediately drive right knee in toward chest, then quickly step it back into plank position. Continue alternating for 10 to 15 reps per side.

6-Inch Hold

Lie face-up, legs straight, arms by sides with hands positioned below glutes for support. Lift legs just six inches off the mat. Draw belly button to spine to keep low back from lifting up off mat. Hold for 30 to 60 seconds.

Pushup

Start in a high plank position, shoulders over wrists, core, glutes, and legs engaged. Bend the elbows to lower chest to the floor. Elbows should point back at a 45-degree angle. Push back up to starting position, making sure to keep hips in line with the rest of the body. If you can't push up without dipping hips or get chest to floor, drop to knees to build strength. Repeat for 10 to 15 reps.

Burpee

Stand with feet hip-width apart. Place hands down in front of feet, then jump feet back to a high plank position, keeping hips up and in line with shoulders and heels. Drop chest to the ground. Push back up, without arching back, as you jump feet back to hands. Stand and jump up. Repeat from the top for 10 to 15 reps.

Also consider other activities that can be substituted on your days between walking/running...cycling, swimming, golf, gardening, bird watching, etc.