

Jeni's Health & Fitness Tips

Issue 11 November 2005

Hi Everyone!

For those of you who are just starting out on an exercise program remember that you should start slowly if you have been inactive for a long period. You can increase intensity and duration as you become fitter. During aerobic exercise you should be able to carry out a conversation whilst exercising. If you are too breathless to do this then you are working too hard.

Research shows that those who make the change from a sedentary lifestyle to one that includes moderate physical activity will gain the most health benefits from exercise. So don't give up when it seems too much of an effort. Over time you will find you can increase your fitness activities by exercising most days of the week for 30-60 minutes. I have not always been fit myself and understand how challenging it can be when you first start out. When you find the prescribed exercise too difficult, make sure you advise your instructor so your program can be modified. Don't hesitate to discuss any difficulties with your instructor.

When you are physically active you need to eat plenty of carbohydrates for energy. The amount required will depend on your age, body size and level of activity. It is recommended that carbohydrates should make up 55-65% of total kilojoule intake.

As energy is expended during exercise you need to top up these stores by eating carbohydrates regularly. A low glycemic index snack or meal, eaten before exercise, will help maintain energy levels for more effective training. If you are exercising for many hours then you are likely to need high glycemic index foods or fluids during exercise for a rapid source of energy. After high intensity exercise another high glycemic index snack, if eaten within 30 minutes will help replace energy expended and assist the recovery process. Many foods display the glycemic index (GI) on their packaging so look out for this when shopping. There are also booklets available listing the GI of foods.

Those of you who are very active may need extra vitamins to meet the demands of excessive exercise. Make sure your diet includes plenty of fruit and vegetables. A minimum of 2 serves of fruit and 5 serves of vegetables a day is recommended. If you are considering supplements it is best to get professional advice first rather than self prescribe.

Yours in health,

Jeni