

Physical inactivity: The fundamental health challenge of our age

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Abstract

Physical inactivity is now the fourth leading cause of death in worldwide. It is a global problem. The present urbanization and mechanization of the world has reduced our level of physical activity. Lack of daily physical activities is the main cause of hypo-kinetic diseases like type II diabetes and hypertension. Further they lead to chronic diseases of heart, cancer, coronary artery etc. Regular physical activity is beneficial for exercising the heart, maintaining healthy bones and maintaining a healthy mind. Physical activity is not only a form of preventative medicine (in terms of a public health strategy), but it is also considered a treatment in itself. The World Health Organization (WHO) believes that more than 60% of the global population is not sufficiently active. Approximately 3.2 million deaths each year are attributable to insufficient physical activity. So physical inactivity is the term used to identify people those who do not get recommended level of regular physical activity. Physical inactivity can be defined as less than five times 30 minutes of moderate activity per week, or less than three times 20 minutes of vigorous activity per week, or equivalent.

Keywords: inactivity, hypo-kinetic diseases, stress, fitness, health

Introduction

Physical activity is defined as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that require energy expenditure. Physical activity benefits everyone, at any age. Regular physical activity decreases the risk of coronary artery disease because it makes the coronary arteries wider and more flexible. The heart muscle, like other muscles in the body, becomes bigger, stronger, and a more efficient to pump. It can circulate the same amount of blood in fewer beats, and this translates to a lower risk for heart attack and stroke. The risk of developing obesity, coronary artery disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and other chronic or fatal illnesses is lowered by regular physical activity. In terms of mental health, physical activity has been proven to reduce anxiety, depression, and stress as well as improve energy level, mood, sleep, and general sense of well-being. Physical benefits include stronger bones, muscles, and joints. Individuals with a healthy level of physical activity look better and have higher self-esteem. Further, physically active individuals have lower direct medical expenses when compared with inactive people. Regular physical activity is one of the most important elements of a healthy lifestyle. For substantial health benefits, adults should do at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity, or 75 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity. For additional and more extensive health benefits, adults should increase their aerobic physical activity to 300 minutes a week of moderate intensity, or 150 minutes a week of vigorous intensity aerobic physical activity. Adults should also do muscle-strengthening activities that are moderate or high intensity and involve all major muscle groups on two or more days in a week. As strength is an important component of fitness, muscle-strengthening exercises provide additional health benefits.

Physical inactivity v/s activity

Physical inactivity is the term used to identify people who do

not do the recommended level of regular physical activity. Physical inactivity can be defined as less than five times 30 minutes of moderate activity per week, or less than three times 20 minutes of vigorous activity per week, or equivalent. Where as Physical activity is defined as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that require energy expenditure. It means a person should do at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity per week. Here intensity refers to the rate at which the activity is being performed or the magnitude of the effort required performing an activity or exercise. It can be thought of "How hard a person works to do the activity". Physical activity simply means movement of the body that uses energy. Walking, gardening, briskly pushing a baby stroller, climbing the stairs, playing soccer, or dancing the night away are all good examples of being active. For health benefits, physical activity should be moderate or vigorous intensity. The word "moderate" and "vigorous" describes the intensity of exercise. Whether an exercise or physical activity is moderate or vigorous depends on how hard the person is working to carry it out and how much energy he is using.

Moderate Physical Activity

Moderate physical activity is defined as an activity that expends approximately 150 calories per day or 1,000 calories per week. Examples of moderate intensity activity:

- Jogging 1.5 miles
- 15 minutes of jumping rope
- 30-45 minutes of playing volley ball
- 30 minutes of playing recreational Tennis
- Walking 3 miles
- Bicycling 5 miles, etc.

The 30 minutes of activity does not need to be continuous and can be broken down into two or three sessions in the initial stage. Be careful about overdoing it, especially when beginning a new activity. It is because muscle strain, soreness,

or injury can occur and slow down progress toward a physical fitness goal. Before beginning any exercise program, visit with your doctor or fitness expert to determine your activities, goals, and limitations. Becoming physically active does not mean joining an expensive gym or athletic club. Choose a variety of enjoyable and convenient activities, incorporate them into your daily routine, and join others to exercise together for added motivation and encouragement. Exercising at about the same time each day helps to establish a routine.

Risk factors for sedentary lifestyle

Most people know physical activity, such as regular exercise, is important for weight loss and optimal health. But, some people do not realize it is being physically inactive is considered a risk factor for several illnesses and medical conditions. People of all ages, from children to the elderly, can suffer negative consequences if they live a sedentary lifestyle and are physically inactive. Here are some of the examples of high risk factors of sedentary lifestyle.

a) Hypertension

Hypertension, which is also known as high blood pressure. This is one of the main risk factors for having serious medical conditions develop, such as a stroke or kidney disease. The blood pressure measures how forceful blood is pushed against the artery walls. The Physical activity, such as regular exercise, may be walking, cycling, yoga, recreational sports, helps make the heart stronger. As the heart becomes stronger, it can pump blood more efficiently throughout the body. When the heart does not have to work as hard, less force is put on the arteries and blood pressure is lower.

b) Heart diseases

The excess amount of fat is deposited in our adipose tissue and also in our blood in the shape of LDL low density lipoprotein, which is called (bad cholesterol) and HDL high density lipoprotein (good cholesterol). One of the main factors that contribute to heart disease is high cholesterol. The chances of developing high cholesterol increase in those who are physically inactive. Exercise helps lower LDL cholesterol levels. Being physically active can also increase levels of HDL cholesterol, which is good cholesterol that helps protect against heart disease.

c) Obesity

When an individual has a body mass index over 30 he or she is considered as obese. According to the WHO, people who are physically inactive have twice the risk of developing obesity. Obesity is a major health problem for people of all ages including children. The illnesses related to obesity include heart disease, hypertension, diabetes and sleep apnea. The obesity can be controlled with proper diet and exercises.

d) Diabetes

Now type 2 diabetes is very common. It is also known as adult onset diabetes. It occurs when insufficient levels of insulin are produced or resistance to insulin develops. The Physical inactivity and overweight are the main cause of diabetes. The complications of diabetes are including kidney disease and heart disease, eye problems and nerve damage.

e) Osteoporosis

Without proper physical activity, overtime the bones can become weak. In this condition, this is known as osteoporosis. The bone can fracture very easily. The condition occurs most frequently in older adults. Physical activity also helps to strengthen the bones and prevent osteoporosis from developing.

f) Anxiety and Depression

The physical inactivity leads to negative emotional effects in our body. According to the WHO people who are sedentary are more likely to develop anxiety and depression. Exercise helps reduce or prevent anxiety and depression in various ways. When a person is physically active, certain chemicals are released in the brain which helps to improve our mood and reduce stress.

g) Colon and breast cancer

Physical inactivity contributes to the risk of colon and breast cancer in a few ways. The people those who are sedentary, the waste moves through the colon in a slower process. Physical activity helps keep things moving through the colon faster and the risk of colon cancer is less. Breast cancer may also occur more often in women who are inactive.

Recommendations

1. Physical fitness

Everybody should understand the importance and benefits of physical fitness in our daily life. They must involve in regular exercise program with stretching and relaxation exercises. It should be included in school and college curriculum compulsory, so that every students should learn the proper exercise programme.

2. Physical activities

Every student should be motivated to participate in various types of physical activities in their school and college days so that they can select any types of activities in their future daily routine life. Find an exercise or any Physical or recreational activities that you enjoy and start doing regularly.

3. Recreation

Everybody should understand the value and importance of participating recreational activities and recreational sports. These activities will definitely helps to reduce stressful life. They will fill more energetic in their day to day life. Recreation is an essential part of every human life and it has many health benefits.

4. Meditation and spiritual lifestyle habits

This is most important aspects of life. Everybody should join spiritual lifestyle programme. Yoga and meditation programme helps to body, mind and soul in an equilibrium state. Meditation is one of the most powerful tools for restoring balance to our mind and body. Meditation brings us in a state of peace and gives us an experience of profound relaxation that dissolves fatigue and long-standing stresses.

Conclusions

Good exercise and nutrition habits can help prevent high blood

pressure and elevated cholesterol, which contribute to heart disease and stroke. They can reduce obesity, which is closely associated with these diseases, as well as with diabetes and certain types of cancer. Regular exercise also help in building strong bones, which are needed to prevent osteoporosis later in life. Other benefits include anxiety and stress reduction, improved self-esteem, and general feelings of well-being. Physical activity levels tend to decrease as a person ages. A physically inactive child is more likely to become a physically inactive adult, which can lead to chronic disease and premature death. Chronic diseases are major health problems in the modern era. Physical inactivity is a primary cause of most chronic diseases. Thousands of deaths result each year due to a lack of regular physical activity. So, if there is any deficiency in food and exercise the body will fall sick.

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