The Fitness Corner

Facilitating Your Fitness Journey

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The Four Benefits of a Fitness Lifestyle

Much has been written about exercise and fitness. There are numerous publications that explain how to start a fitness program, perform specific exercises and improve your diet. Some of these books also describe the benefits of a fitness lifestyle (defined as an exercise and nutrition regimen that leads to an ideal level of *aerobic capacity*, *muscular strength and endurance*, *flexibility* and *body composition*). Here are my Top 4:

1. **Enhanced Health and Decreased Risk for Disease**. Much has been written about the health benefits of exercise and the poor state of fitness in America. To put it simply, poor diet and a lack of exercise is killing us! According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2 out of every 3 Americans is overweight. 30% of adult Americans are clinically obese. This obesity is widespread throughout the U.S. In 2004, 42 states had obesity prevalence rates of at least 20%. The number of young people who are overweight has more than tripled since 1980. This is caused, at least in part, by a lack of exercise. According to the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), only 1 out of every 4 Americans gets the recommended amount of exercise on a weekly basis (about 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days). 25% of us never exercise at all. This has significant ramifications for our health since there is a direct link between a sedentary lifestyle, obesity and many deadly diseases. Specifically, overweight and obese individuals are at a much greater risk for hypertension, high cholesterol, Type 2 diabetes, coronary artery disease, stroke, gallbladder disease, osteoarthritis, some cancers (endometrial, breast and colon), sleep apnea, and respiratory problems. ACSM estimates that poor diet and physical inactivity contribute to nearly 400,000 deaths a year. Therefore, the greatest benefit of a fitness lifestyle is improved health and a longer life.

2. **Decreased Risk of Injury**. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than one million workers suffer back injuries each year. This accounts for 20% of all workplace injuries and illnesses. In addition, one-fourth of all workers' compensation claims

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involve back injuries costing industry billions of dollars annually. While a fitness lifestyle will not eliminate this problem, the Occupational Safety and Health Organization has recommended physical conditioning and stretching programs as one way of reducing these injuries.

3. **Improved Work Performance**. Yes, being fit and healthy can improve your work performance, and will save you and your employer money. In a recent study reported by ACSM, researchers found that when workers used their company gym, they were more productive and got along better with their co-workers. During the study, ratings for mental and interpersonal performance as well as the ability to manage time and output demands were significantly higher on exercise days. In addition, other studies have shown that corporate exercise programs can pay off in reduced health care costs, absenteeism and stress, and higher morale and productivity.

4. **Increased Self-Confidence**. While much has been written about the health and physical benefits of a fitness lifestyle, relatively little has been written about the psychological benefits such as improved confidence. However, it is clear that healthy and fit individuals gain several mental and emotional benefits such as a better sense of well-being, a greater sense of accomplishment, and greater self-confidence relative to work and social interactions with others.

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HFC — Holmes Fitness Coaching

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At Holmes Fitness Coaching, my primary focus is on your health, physical fitness and quality of life. Using my 4-phase *Fitness Coaching Process*, I will help you improve your health and fitness, lose weight, reduce stress, and learn how to create a better balance between your personal and professional life. I also work with organizations that want to improve employee health and fitness in ways that positively impact job performance. I offer a variety of services designed to help you enhance overall health including **Fitness Coaching**, **Health & Fitness Seminars**, the **Fitness Corner Newsletter** and **TIPS Booklets**. Seminar topics include:

1. Health, Fitness and Job Performance.
2. How to Beat Stress and Balance Your Life.
3. How to Start a Successful Exercise Program.
4. Children and Exercise: How to Create a Lifelong Connection.
5. Lose Weight and Keep it Off...Permanently.

For more information on my health and fitness services, visit **www.holmesfitness.com**.