

The basics of getting into shape

BY CARLA CLEGG

WINNIPEG (CUP) — Getting your body into shape does not have to cost an arm and a leg. Nor does it have to be time consuming and tedious. By using the patented "Survival Kit to Fitness," getting into shape can be made cheap and easy.

First of all, fitness is not about killing yourself to look like Schwarzenegger or Sable. So, the first thing to pull out of our survival kit is Knowledge. Fitness is all about active living — incorporating some kind of physical activity into your daily

life. The components of physical activity are cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, and flexibility.

The cardiovascular system is trained through continuous activities using large muscle groups such as the leg and arm action used in walking, jogging, and swimming. Cardio can be done four to seven times a week.

Muscular endurance and strength are achieved through activities that require you to work against any type of resistance. Resistance training can be done two to four days a week and is great for improving bones and

posture.

Flexibility can be trained four to seven days a week. It is achieved through gentle reaching, bending and stretching activities. Stretching can be done while watching television or after exercising.

Now that we have the knowledge, let's move on to fitness for the financially challenged. From the survival kit, we present the personal gym. Yes, you too can have a personal gym just like the rich and famous. There is no 800-number to call and you don't have to sign on a dotted line. Just look in the mirror,

and there it is — your body. It's sturdy, it will last you a lifetime, and best of all, there is no assembly required.

For cardio work, put your favorite tunes on and dance, or run on the spot, up or down the stairs, or through the hallways of your dorm for 20-30 minutes.

Push ups are great for muscular strength and endurance of the arms, chest and shoulders. A squat sit against a wall for one minute is great for the legs. For the calves, do two sets of ten reps of heel raises, one fast and one slow. Good old sit ups are great for the abs, but remember to keep your back on the floor as you curl up. For the back, try a superman hold. Just lie on your stomach and lift your arms and legs off the floor.

If you find your personal gym too bare, there are some inexpensive items that can be added. Resistance bands are versatile and compact. These

rubber bands come in a many sizes and resistance levels. They can be used to improve muscular strength and endurance, range of motion, and flexibility. Skipping ropes are not just child's play. Boxers use skipping as a major component of their cardio workout. Aerobic steps can be used for both aerobic and resistance training. Dumbbells are a muscle training must have if you plan to rev up your metabolism. The fact is, the more muscle mass you have, the more calories you burn.

Both the personal gym and the accessories are inexpensive and time efficient. However, you might find that they lack social atmosphere. To solve this problem, have some friends join your program or join a gym. The latter advice is more costly, but because it can be fun and motivating.

For now, remember fitness is part of your daily life. It's fun and can be inexpensive. On that note, keep on keeping fit.

Important principles of stretching

Things every athlete must know about flexibility

It is important for an athlete to maintain good flexibility as it is commonly believed that increased flexibility contributes to enhanced athletic performance.

It is also commonly thought that the increase in flexibility in inflexible joints tends to decrease the injuries to those joints. Since flexibility permits a greater range of motion within the joint, the ligaments and other connective tissues are not so easily strained or torn.

It also permits greater freedom of motion in all directions. The 'tight' or inflexible athlete performs with a handicap in terms of movement and is more susceptible to muscle strains and tears. It is also equally important to remember that the opposite of inflexible, being hyperflexible, should be avoided because 'loose jointed' athletes may be prone to dislocations and separations.

There are many types of stretching techniques which have evolved over the years to aid in improving flexibility. The oldest technique is called ballistic stretching which makes use of repetitive bouncing motions.

The second tech-

nique is known as static stretching which involves stretching a muscle to the point of discomfort and then holding it at that point for an extended period of time.

The third and newest technique is called proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation (PNF). This involves alternating contractions and stretches.

Ballistic stretching techniques are not commonly recommended because of the dangers in exceeding the limits of the muscle when the person is performing the bouncing motions. They should therefore be avoided in most cases.

The static stretch technique is the technique most widely used today. The technique involves passively placing a muscle in its maximal position of stretch and then holding it there for an extended period of time. The recommended length of time that a stretch should be held varies. However, it should be held for at least 10 seconds and preferably up to 20 seconds. The static stretch of each muscle should be repeated three to four times.

Stretching using the PNF technique can involve either hold-relax or contract-relax techniques. In either case the muscle is placed in its maximally

stretched position and then the alternating combination of hold-relax or contract-relax is done. These techniques should consist of a 5-10 seconds pushing phase followed by a 5-10 seconds relaxation phase. Many of these PNF techniques are best done in partner situations.

Stretching should be done after a general warm-up, before starting any vigorous conditioning or sporting activity. Stretching should also be done as part of the cooling down process after physical activity. If an athlete is trying to increase their flexibility then they should perform their stretching routine two to three times a day.

While stretching it is important that the athlete starts with easy stretching first and then progresses to more intense stretching. It is important to remember to breathe while stretching, exhaling the air as the stretch is assumed. It is also important to avoid painful severe stretching. Overstretching an area may produce minor muscular tearing and can lead to muscular soreness.

Submitted by
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TO	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
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EDMONTON	—	20:45	—	—	—	—	—
TORONTO	—	15:00	13:50 ^a	20:20 ^b	11:30 ¹⁰ 12:30 15:50 ¹⁰	10:10	18:25
ST. JOHN'S	—	19:55	—	18:45	—	—	—

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