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Exercise & Physical Activity

Exercise and physical activity are essential for maintaining overall health, improving mental well-being, and enhancing quality of life. Here are tips and guidelines to help you integrate physical activity into your daily routine effectively:

1. Understand the Benefits of Exercise

- **Improves physical health:** Reduces the risk of chronic diseases like heart disease, diabetes, and obesity.
- **Boosts mental health:** Relieves stress, anxiety, and depression while enhancing mood and cognitive function.
- **Increases energy:** Promotes better sleep and boosts daily energy levels.
- **Enhances flexibility and strength:** Supports mobility, balance, and overall functional fitness.

2. Types of Physical Activity

- **Aerobic exercise:** Activities like walking, running, cycling, and swimming that improve cardiovascular health.
- **Strength training:** Weightlifting or bodyweight exercises to build muscle and maintain bone density.
- **Flexibility and mobility:** Yoga or stretching to improve range of motion and prevent injuries.
- **Balance exercises:** Activities like tai chi or balance drills to enhance stability and reduce fall risks.

3. Start with Realistic Goals

- **Set achievable targets:** Begin with small, attainable goals like a 20-minute walk three times a week.
- **Track progress:** Use fitness apps, journals, or wearable devices to monitor improvements.
- **Build consistency:** Focus on developing a regular routine rather than perfection.

4. Create a Well-Rounded Routine

- **Include variety:** Mix different types of exercises to work various muscle groups and stay engaged.

- **Plan recovery days:** Schedule rest or active recovery (e.g., light stretching) to allow your body to heal and adapt.
- **Adapt to your lifestyle:** Choose activities that fit into your daily schedule and personal preferences.

5. Make Physical Activity Enjoyable

- **Find activities you love:** Dance, swim, hike, or play sports to stay motivated.
- **Invite others:** Exercise with friends, family, or coworkers for added fun and accountability.
- **Switch it up:** Change routines periodically to prevent boredom and challenge your body.

6. Incorporate Movement Into Daily Life

- **Take active breaks:** Stand up, stretch, or walk during work or study sessions.
- **Choose stairs over elevators:** Simple daily choices can boost physical activity.
- **Walk or bike for errands:** Use these as opportunities to integrate exercise into your day.

7. Stay Safe During Exercise

- **Warm up and cool down:** Prepare your body for movement and prevent stiffness afterward.
- **Use proper form:** Learn correct techniques to avoid injuries, especially for strength training.
- **Listen to your body:** Stop if you feel pain or discomfort and consult a professional if needed.

8. Stay Hydrated and Nourished

- **Drink water:** Stay hydrated before, during, and after workouts.
- **Eat for energy:** Fuel your body with balanced meals, including carbohydrates, proteins, and healthy fats.
- **Replenish nutrients:** Snack on post-workout foods like fruit, yogurt, or a protein shake.

9. Overcome Common Barriers

- **Lack of time:** Break exercise into short sessions, like 10-minute workouts, throughout the day.
- **Low motivation:** Set reminders, create playlists, or join fitness groups for encouragement.
- **Limited resources:** Use bodyweight exercises, household items, or free online workout videos.

10. Seek Professional Guidance

- **Consult a doctor:** Before starting a new exercise program, especially if you have existing health conditions.
- **Work with a trainer:** Get personalized advice and ensure proper technique.
- **Join classes:** Explore local gyms or online fitness programs to learn new skills and stay motivated.

Recommended Physical Activity Levels

- **Adults:** At least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity weekly, plus two days of strength training.
- **Children and Teens:** At least 60 minutes of physical activity daily, including aerobic, muscle-strengthening, and bone-strengthening exercises.