

active
living for
all ages

In Motion

A PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN ORTHOPAEDIC SOCIETY FOR SPORTS MEDICINE

WINTER 2013



Even Just Minimal Exercise Can Make a Big Health Impact

By John D. Kelly IV, MD

Exercise is perhaps the closest thing to a miracle drug in existence. The benefits of exercise are numerous and include easing depression, lessening heart disease and cancer risk, and even lowering infection risk. Especially important is the effect of exercise on weight loss and on regulation of blood sugar. Obesity and diabetes are perhaps the leading two health threats to Americans with prevalence rates of both conditions skyrocketing. Thankfully even small bouts of exercise can keep pounds off and greatly lessen diabetes risk.

Both aerobic (e.g., jogging, cycling) and anaerobic (e.g., weightlifting) exercise can increase the body's utilization of glucose and increase insulin sensitivity. A well-known condition, metabolic syndrome, is considered a prediabetic condition characterized by insulin resistance, central obesity, hypertension, and elevated blood lipids. Exercise, if instituted early and regularly, may reverse this condition. Both aerobic and anaerobic exercise increase the body's metabolism several hours *after* exercise and lean body mass is gained.

The cumulative weekly length of exercise seems to be most important, with 90 minutes minimum serving as a threshold for substantive positive health effects. That is, those with very busy lifestyles can accrue more minutes on weekends and still reap significant benefits.

Most patients will respond well to the habit of two aerobic and two anaerobic workouts per week, each consisting of approximately 30 minutes. Small changes in lifestyle, such as taking the stairs, walking at lunchtime, and even calisthenics when a free moment arises, will translate to significant health dividends.

Get moving—your life depends upon it!

