



## DAY 03 - AEROBIC CHALLENGE

### LIVE THE FLOURISHING LIFE: FLOURISHING FITNESS

Do you get twenty minutes of exercise every day, seven days a week? According to experts, this is the minimum of what most adults need to stay healthy. The recommendation is at least 150 hours of moderate-intensity activity or 75 minutes at a high intensity per week for adults. Maybe that goal seems out of reach. Today's challenge is a great first step—just twenty minutes of movement and you'll be on the way to a host of positive health outcomes.

#### EXERCISE & HEALTH

Physical activity has been proven to bring a huge range of health benefits aside from simply losing weight—those who exercise regularly even have a lower mortality rate than those who don't. One major reason for this is the benefits of exercise for heart health. It reduces blood pressure and hypertension, and substantially lowers your risk of developing coronary heart disease, regardless of your weight. It also strengthens your immune system, protects against some forms of cancer, reduces your likelihood of developing type two diabetes, maintains the health of your joints, and builds bone mass and muscle strength.

Exercise can be beneficial for your mental health, as it is effective in improving mood and relieving symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Aerobic exercise has some specific benefits. There is evidence for its effectiveness in treating conditions such as type two diabetes, asthma, chronic pain and insomnia—make sure to consult your doctor for management of these issues if you suffer from them. Aerobic exercise is also particularly effective in weight management.

#### MAKING IT HAPPEN

This is the most important thing you can do to make regular exercise a sustainable habit in your life—make it fun! It can take time to see many of the benefits of exercise, and most people won't persevere if it is hard and unpleasant. But exercise doesn't have to be this way. There's nothing wrong with exercising just for your health, but you will more likely do it if it's enjoyable, and you'll gain more benefits doing something that feels good for *your* body.

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Maybe you hate jogging, but how does a brisk walk in the park sound? If cross-fit isn't your thing, you could try a dance class. If yoga bores you, how about weightlifting, boxing or martial arts? Take a hike or hire a kayak to explore nature. Ride your bike to work or join a sports team. Connect with your inner child with skipping, roller-skating or trampoline-ing. Whatever you choose, be kind to yourself. Start small if you need to. Even if you feel like you're not doing enough, any amount of activity can have a positive impact.

Here are a few more things to consider when planning your physical activity:

- **Find a buddy.** Doing any of these things with a friend can be motivating and make it more fun. Try going on a walk with a co-worker at lunch or suggesting a game of sport instead of another dinner and drinks for your next get-together.
- **Know your needs.** At least 150-300 minutes of moderate or 75-150 minutes of high-intensity exercise is the recommendation for the average adult. There are different recommendations for older adults, children and adolescents, pregnant and postpartum women, and people with an illness or disability. If you're unsure about your needs, so a medical professional.
- **Reap more benefits.** Over 300 minutes of moderate activity per week has been shown to have additional health benefits, but you'll need to work your way up to this if you're not already exercising regularly. Enjoy the many benefits of whatever amount of exercise you can do now and start to challenge yourself as you get fitter.
- **Find your strength.** An additional two sessions per week of moderate-intensity muscle-strengthening activity are also recommended and have their own set of benefits. You will try some strengthening exercises on day five of this challenge.