

Exercise module

CARDIO/AEROBIC EXERCISE: SPORTS AND RECREATION ACTIVITIES

By now, you've probably developed the endurance, strength, and flexibility to consider adding a sport or recreational activity to your exercise program. Here's a quick review of options to consider:

Swimming

Provided that you swim continuously at a reasonable pace, this is one of the best aerobic activities. In addition, it builds flexibility and strength, too. If you don't know how to swim or would like to improve your technique, consider taking lessons at your nearby gym or YM/WCA. As with all sports activities, learning proper techniques can enhance your enjoyment of this activity.

Hiking and Cycling

This is a great way to enjoy the great outdoors while building your aerobic fitness. Stretching and strengthening activities for your legs are especially important and good equipment (shoes, boots, hiking poles, bikes) is essential. For a social twist, check local athletic, bicycle stores or www.Meetup.com to learn about local hiking or biking groups. Your weight loss program provider may also have a Facebook page where you can find others who have formed groups.

Racquet Sports

These include racquetball, squash, tennis, ping pong and pickle ball. Handball is similar — but you use a gloved hand rather than a racquet. All of these sports (except ping pong and pickle ball) require quick bursts of energy. Racquetball, squash and handball are a bit more aerobic than tennis. Many health clubs have indoor courts so you can play year round. If you prefer not to join a club, public parks often have tennis courts.

Volleyball, Baseball, Softball and Golf

These are great warm weather sports. They generally aren't aerobically demanding, but they offer a great opportunity to socialize while increasing daily activity levels. These sports require flexibility of your upper and lower body, so stretching is especially important. Many recreational centers and athletic programs have volleyball and basketball leagues. And, many locales offer public and private golf courses.

Basketball and Soccer

These sports provide good aerobic benefits. Jogging is a good training exercise for these sports, since running is involved. Ball handling skills are important for both sports. The difference is that with basketball you use your hands to handle the ball and with soccer, you use your feet. For injury prevention, be cautious when jumping, sprinting or lunging.

Cross Country Skiing

Since you use both legs and arms in rhythmic, continuous motion, cross-country skiing is one of the best sports for developing and improving your aerobic fitness level. And, if you can't ski on real snow, there are cross country skiing simulators.

Yoga, Tai Chi and Chi Gong

These activities are quiet exercise alternatives. They build flexibility, decrease stress and improve coordination. Health and wellness centers often offer these programs and you can find groups on www.Meetup.com.