

## *No More Excuses!*

This is the first edition of what we hope will prove to be a very useful series called “No More Excuses.” People offer excuses for everything from why they didn’t take out the trash to why their department is over budget. Our job as fitness professionals is to help you recognize your exercise and nutrition excuses for what they are. There are legitimate explanations for falling short of your goals, and we want to recognize those reasons as well and help you overcome them. **BE WARNED!** Each month you are going to lose a potential excuse for skipping your workouts, cutting them short or not seeing results!

This month we remind you that fitness has many components. There are no excuses for unbalanced fitness program! Your exercise routine should have three elements:

1. Cardiovascular/Aerobic Conditioning
2. Strength/Resistance Training
3. Flexibility Training

Having a balanced exercise program doesn’t mean that you devote an equal amount of time and energy to each component. It means including an adequate amount of each component to help you reach your personal goals, improve overall health, and avoid injury. The most common excuse for excluding one of these elements from your fitness routine is that you don’t feel it will help you reach your personal goals. Remember, fitness is about the big picture—your overall health.

Someone trying to lose weight usually places a heavy focus on **cardiovascular exercise**. And they should. This type of exercise is the biggest calorie burner. Conversely, people who are trying to “bulk up” and add more muscle mass to their body tend to neglect this part of their exercise program. Aerobic exercise should be a relatively large percent of your fitness routine if you are trying to lose weight and should be a smaller percent of your overall routine if you are trying to gain muscle mass. However, it should never be the only component of your fitness program and it should never be excluded altogether.

The benefits of aerobic exercise include improved mental health, heightened immune system response, increased stamina, weight loss as well as decreased risk of developing a myriad of diseases. In order to realize the benefits of aerobic exercise, the American College of Sports Medicine recommends exercising three to five days a week for 20-60 minutes.

The same rule applies to **strength training**. People trying to lose weight often overlook this element. Many women claim they are afraid of “bulking up.” However, a strength training plan that is designed to help you reach your goals will help you tone and tighten up loose muscles in a way that aerobic exercise simply never will. In addition to the obvious benefit of increased strength, other benefits of resistance training include: improved self-confidence and body image, increased lean body mass, decreased risk of osteoporosis, improved coordination/balance and decreased risk of injury.

**Flexibility** is probably the most neglected part of your fitness routine. You don’t need to devote a great deal of time to stretching, but you do need to do it. Adding 5-10 minutes of stretching to each workout could make a dramatic difference in reducing your risk of injury, relieving muscle soreness, increasing range of motion, increasing mental and physical relaxation and improving sports performance. Last month’s article “Stretching 101” offered other guidelines and tips on stretching. More information on stretching can be found on our website at <http://www.elitefit.com/exercises.html>.

As always, we look forward to the opportunity to help you reach your fitness goals and improve your overall health by building a balanced exercise program that is designed just for you!

Call or email today to schedule your  
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