

## Choosing the Right Exercise



**S**till looking for the one right form of exercise? You might do well, fitness gurus suggest, to widen your vision! Engaging in any single fitness activity—be it running, weight lifting or yoga—just doesn't add up to optimum fitness.

According to the American Council on Exercise, a good overall exercise regimen includes three key areas of physical fitness: cardiovascular, strength and flexibility.

Unfortunately, most individual activities emphasize only one of the three.

- **Aerobic exercise increases your heart rate** through the sustained actions of large muscle groups, like the legs and buttocks. Making your heart and lungs work harder improves cardiovascular health and increases your body's ability to deliver oxygen to other organs and muscles. Running, walking, swimming and cycling, as well as many other activities, can improve cardiovascular fitness. Experts recommend engaging in aerobic exercise at least three times per week for at least 20 minutes per session.
- **Strength training conditions both large and small muscles**, increasing muscle and bone mass, stamina and overall physical strength. Weight lifting (using free weights or weight machines) builds strength. So do other resistance exercises like push-ups and working out with resistance bands. Ideally, you should include at least two strength-training sessions per week.
- **Flexibility training improves the elasticity of muscles and soft tissues**, enhancing posture, balance and freedom of movement through stretching and gentle motion. Yoga, tai chi and Pilates are among the forms of exercise that focus on flexibility. Including flexibility routines in your fitness program also provides a built-in antidote to the stiffness and muscle tension that sometimes result from more vigorous aerobic and strength-building activities.

Whether your goal is athletic conditioning, weight loss or simply better health, you will benefit from a cross-training program that incorporates aerobic, strength and flexibility routines. We can help design a fitness schedule that best meets your individual needs and goals.