



# THE THERAPEUTIC IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL EXERCISE

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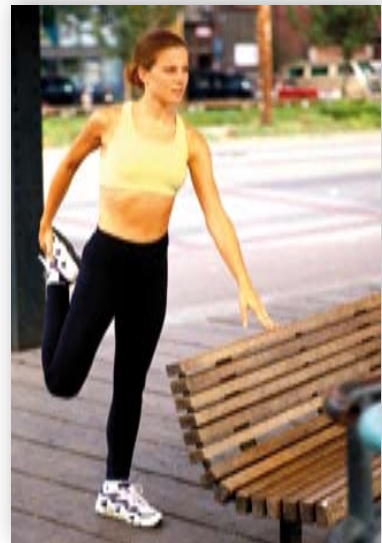
By definition, physical activity signifies any bodily movement that results in the expenditure of energy and therefore encompasses most of the actions involved in our daily lives including anything from making the bed to walking the dog.



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On the other hand, physical exercise denotes a particular activity whereby energetic movements increase the heart rate and consequently the speed at which blood is pumped around the body. Moreover, it is associated with activities which involve the concentrated expansion and contraction of various muscles in order to maintain or to change bodily shape.

However, this does not necessarily mean that physical exercise incorporates only activities that are strenuous or over-exertive. Indeed, a brisk fifteen minute walk to the shops or the office constitutes cardio-vascular activity and therefore may be regarded as part of an exercise regime.



In contrast, a sedentary lifestyle implies the complete lack of any physical exercise. Although normal daily routines invariably amount to a certain degree of activity, the absence of cardio-vascular stimulation of any kind indicates an inadequate level of fitness for what is considered necessary to good health based on scientific evidence.

Nowadays, with the ever-increasing importance of physical appearance, the external benefits of internal health are often overlooked and exercise is avoided in favour of more effortless ways to alter the physical shape. However, physical exercise serves not only as an aid to esthetical enhancement, but rather as a maintenance programme for the entire body.

The importance of maintaining a healthy heart should not be underestimated at any age, but especially by those of advancing years. Healthy cardio-vascular and pulmonary systems can prevent serious illness and prolong life expectancy and furthermore, aid recovery after surgical procedures.