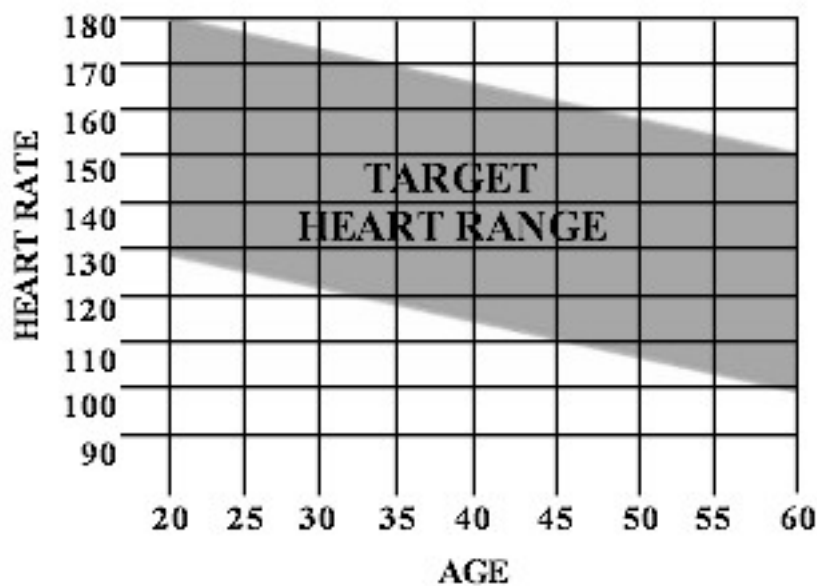


WHAT IS FITNESS?

Your Personal Plan for Total Fitness

Fitness. It's a much-confused term. To some, it means being trim or muscular. But, total fitness is more than that -- it means keeping your body machine in top working order. A total physical fitness plan includes three types of exercise -- aerobics (which exercise large muscle groups and increase your body's ability to use oxygen), stretching exercises (which improve muscle flexibility), and resistance exercise to improve muscle strength.



Aim for the low range of your THR when you first begin your aerobic fitness plan. Gradually work up to the higher range as you become more physically fit. Remember, though, if you are a smoker, suffer from a chronic medical condition or have a personal or family history of heart disease, check with your healthcare professional before starting any exercise program.

Aerobics -- The Core of Your Program

Your heart pumps oxygen-rich blood to the rest of your body. And, since the heart itself is a muscle, it needs exercise to maintain strength and endurance. Aerobics exercise your heart by helping it reach and maintain a Target Heart Range (THR) for at least 20 to 30 minutes. Your THR is the safest range of heartbeats per minute during exercise. Activities such as swimming, walking, jogging, running, stair climbing, and cross country skiing are all aerobic.

Stretching for Flexibility

Stretching exercises improve muscle flexibility and joint mobility. Stiff, weak muscles can limit movement, fail to support the rest of your body, and may make it hard to maintain a vigorous activity long enough to reach your THR.

Resistance Exercise -- For Strength

Muscles help you move, and also support all the bones in your body. Push ups, pull ups, and weight lifting are resistance exercises that cause muscles to strengthen.

A Healthy Lifestyle -- Rounding Out Your Plan

Fitness also includes weight control, proper nutrition, and stress reduction. Becoming fit is saying "yes" to life and "no" to unhealthy habits such as smoking and alcohol and drug misuse. A total fitness plan can improve both the quality and the quantity of the years ahead of you.

Starting Your Plan

As you begin your fitness plan, pace yourself. Know your correct THR and try not to exceed it. Choose activities you enjoy as your core aerobic exercises, and do a variety of conditioning exercises to improve flexibility and muscle strength. Finally, make healthy lifestyle choices to help yourself become healthy and fit.