

HEALTH AND FITNESS

REGULAR EXERCISE KEY TO SUCCESS

Loretta Mostofi

OVERWORK CAN DO DAMAGE

WITH many Australians not getting enough daily exercise and others getting too much, what is the healthy balance to maximise our personal wellbeing and fitness?

Many health experts prescribe regular exercise to keep healthy and reduce the symptoms of depression, stress and anxiety.

Thirty to 45 minutes, five days a week is an adequate amount to achieve these benefits. Too much exercise is just as bad as too little exercise. Both sides of the coin can contribute to long-term health problems, injuries and disruptions to your personal life.

Exercising too much can cause injuries like stress fractures, strains and sprains, fatigue, de-

hydration, osteoporosis and arthritis. Typical symptoms of over-exercising include insomnia, aches or pain in your muscles/joints, fatigue, headaches, inability to finish workouts, loss in appetite, feeling unmotivated and lacking energy.

Over-exercising also increases your cortisol levels, which means a greater tendency to store fat in your lower stomach area.

Cortisol is a hormone produced by the adrenal glands and is related to storage of fat around the lower abdomen. Excessive strenuous exercise added to an already stressed mental or emotional life results in higher

cortisol levels in the body. This can become a vicious cycle as you may feel that you need to exercise more in order to reduce the stubborn belly fat.

Symptoms of high cortisol levels include chronic fatigue, cravings for salty foods, a need for caffeine or stimulants to stay awake during the day, swelling in the lower legs, dizziness when rising from a seated position, arthritic problems, cramps in the calves at night, and waking up frequently at night.

Loretta Mostofi (pictured right) is an Australian and world figure champion



EXERCISE TIPS

1. Aim for 30-45 min exercise, five days a week or 60 min exercise, three days a week.
2. Listen to your body and give it rest when needed. Resting a day after a hard workout and taking a full day off each week is highly recommended.
3. Monitor your weight by exercising and follow a healthy nutrition plan.
4. Focus on the benefits of exercise instead of what you look like. Exercising to extremes to speed up weight loss can do more harm than good.
5. Always warm up and cool down when exercising.
6. If you are just beginning to exercise, start slowly and gradually build up your intensity and duration to prevent injuries.
7. Vary your routine on a daily or weekly basis.
8. If you exercise every day, alternate between easy and hard days.
9. Get a good night's sleep to keep your cortisol levels down.
10. Exercising for long periods of time at a high intensity many times a week is not the best choice for your health.

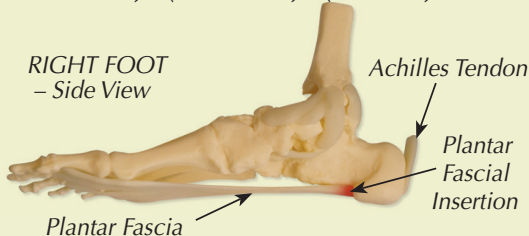
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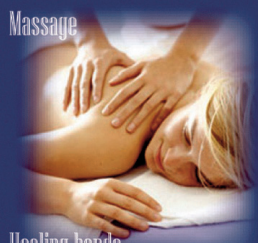
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