

AN ACTIVE LIFESTYLE IS THE BEST MEDICINE

PANDEMIC HAS INTERRUPTED MANY PEOPLE'S EXERCISE ROUTINE, WRITES DR. NADIA ALAM



DR. NADIA ALAM
Column

I spend more time these days writing prescriptions for ... exercise.

Studies show spending most of your day sitting may be worse for your health than smoking. This is true regardless of genetics, body shape or whether or not a person already has other illnesses.

Making exercise a habit will not only reduce the risk and impact of chronic disease and cancer, it will also reduce blood pressure, cholesterol and overall inflammation in the body.

Exercise improves cognitive function, sleep and mood in both the young and the old.

People who move around and who enjoy an active lifestyle are more likely to live and age more gracefully.

As we age, we lose muscle mass, our joints stiffen,

our eyesight and hearing go.

And the onset of frailty, or the loss of our body's natural reserve, leaves us vulnerable to sudden dramatic outcomes from seemingly minor events such as a simple treatable infection, a change in medication or even a change in environment.

Regular exercise and the strength gained from exercise reduces the odds of frailty.

When writing an exercise prescription, I'm very specific. I set goals around frequency, intensity, minutes per session and types of exercise.

The pandemic has disrupted all of our routines.

Everyone is tired.

Motivation to exercise is understandably at an all-

time low.

So I tell people, start with what is achievable. If they are not used to any type of regular exercise, I recommend they start with five minutes, 10 minutes, 15 or 20 minutes of exercise and then add a minute every week.

I suggest walking to start. I move up to body weight resistance training and more vigorous aerobic exercise. And then I move up from there, citing specific resources for more info.

For those who used to exercise regularly and now no longer do, my job turns to motivation and problem-solving around the barriers to resuming activity.

Becoming strong of mind and strong of body is well worth the time and effort. So set a goal, and then get up and move.

Nadia Alam is a Halton physician and past president of the Ontario Medical Association. Her columns also appear on www.drnodialalam.com. She can be reached through her website.

As a supporter of the Halton Hills Climate Action group, I sincerely hope our local news outlets will provide full coverage of these important issues and hold our elected representatives, as well as developers and business interests, accountable for the decisions that will affect us and future generations.

JEANNINE D'ENTREMONT,
GEORGETOWN

CLIMATE CHANGE AND GROWTH EXTREMELY IMPORTANT ISSUES

A column in the May 27 Independent and Free Press, Burlington Post, Oakville Beaver and Milton Champion refers to an advisory panel that told these local papers what issues they should focus on.

While the topics listed

are all worthy of coverage, two very important issues were not mentioned — the climate crisis and Halton's growth plan to 2050.

These two issues are among the most critical for Halton Region, now and into the future.

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