

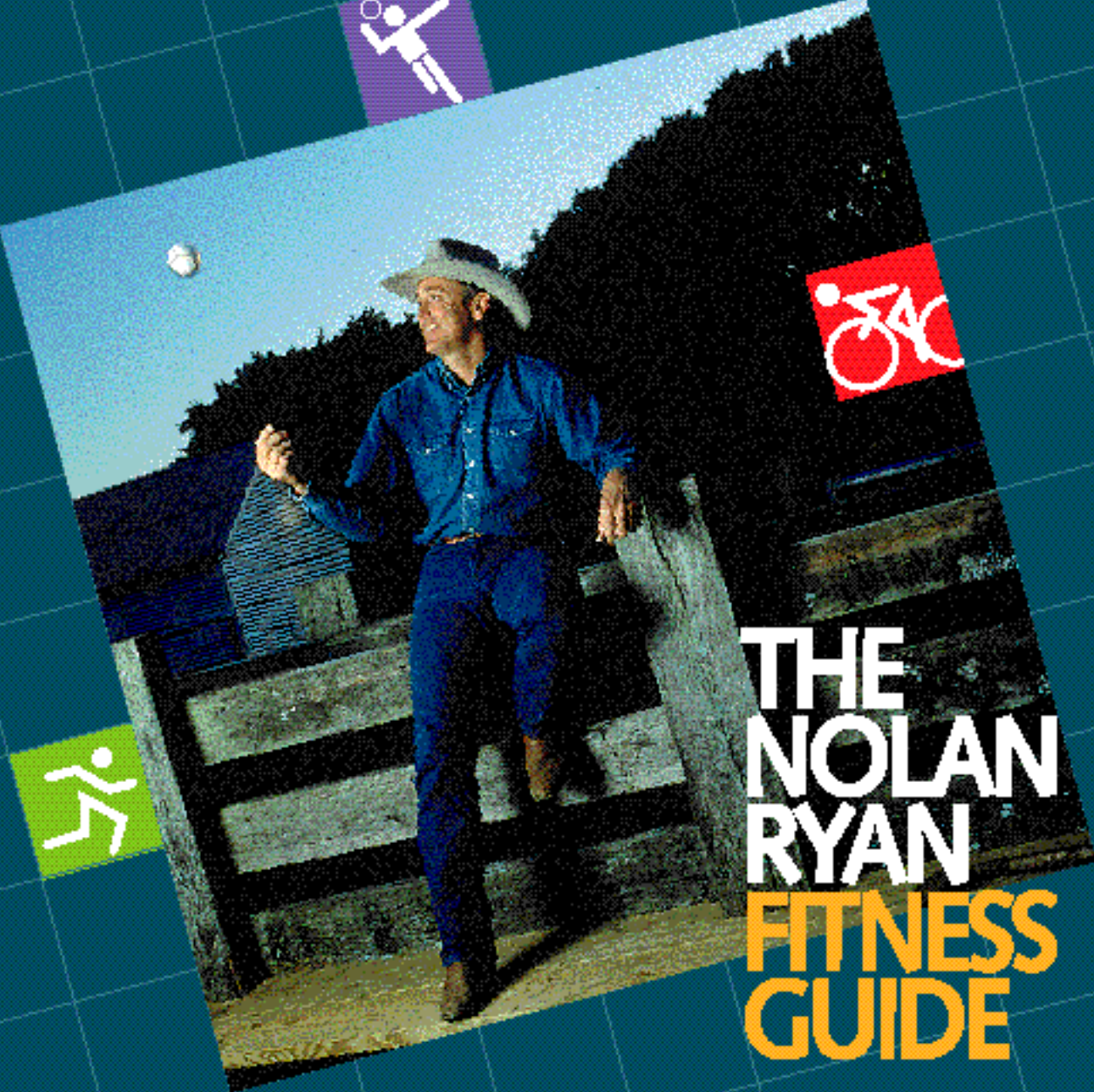


THE PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL
ON PHYSICAL FITNESS
AND SPORTS



Advil
Forum on
Health Education

This guide is created as a public service



THE NOLAN RYAN FITNESS GUIDE

GAIN PRESIDENTIAL RECOGNITION FOR YOUR COMMITMENT TO FITNESS

Now, committing yourself to a more active lifestyle has an added benefit: presidential recognition.

Through a new program from the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, anyone age six and above can earn a Presidential Sports Award (PSA) in 68 categories, including Family Fitness.

To earn yours, keep a log of your participation in a sports or fitness activity over four months. Once you forward a complete log, you'll receive a personalized Presidential certificate, a blazer emblem noting the sport and luggage and emergency identification tags.

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THE PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL
ON PHYSICAL FITNESS
AND SPORTS

Dear Friend,

The goal at the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports is to Get America Moving! While most Americans know that physical activity is enjoyable, fewer Americans are getting active physically. "The Nolan Ryan Fitness Guide" is an ideal way of reaching — without preaching — vast numbers of less active Americans. In simple, sensible terms, Nolan points out the obvious: fitness and good health are within the reach of virtually anyone who will make a personal commitment to become and stay physically active.

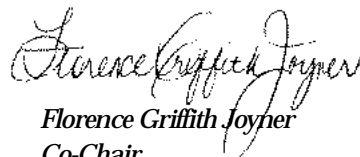
This book, brought to you by the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports and the Advil® Forum on Health Education, will make a difference! Just as baseball legend Nolan Ryan made a difference as the longest career player in professional baseball, "The Nolan Ryan Fitness Guide" will make a profound difference in the life of any reader who takes its simple message to heart: Get up and get active!

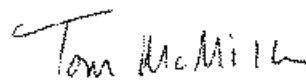
And if simply feeling great isn't enough, you can also earn a prestigious Presidential Sports Award for the personal challenge of adopting a physically active lifestyle.

When President Clinton addressed the new members of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports in the White House Rose Garden, he said that the American people need to "seize control of their own personal health care destinies and that of their families." He was talking about the same kind of personal responsibility that is at the core of this country's greatness, and at the core of this book. There are no greater obstacles on the road to improved health and fitness than those you put there yourself. And there is no one in a better position to remove them than you.

So don't just sit there and read this valuable book. Get moving! And bring someone — a friend or relative — along with you to make that first move in a new direction. Take Nolan's sage advice and get physically active, for life. Get Moving America!

Wishing you good health and fitness,


Florence Griffith Joyner
Co-Chair


Tom McMillen
Co-Chair

Dear Friend,

When I was 10 years old and playing pick-up ball with a bunch of friends, I never dreamed I'd be playing in the majors, let alone playing into my 40s. As a kid, I had no concept of physical conditioning; I just knew I liked to throw the ball. But the longer I played, the more I realized how important fitness is. I know now that if I hadn't been so committed to fitness, I never could have stayed in the game so long.

My wife, Ruth, and I think that staying fit should be fun and enjoyable, and that's what we've tried to teach our kids, Reid, Reese and Wendy. We make it something we look forward to, rather than dread. We walk together, play tennis, run with the dogs, play ball with our kids...being active has become such an integral part of our lives that it's never a chore.

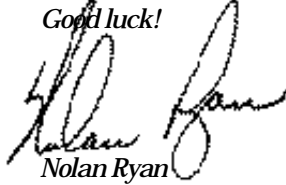
But that doesn't mean it's not hard to devote the time to it that we'd like to.

In fact, now that I've retired my Rangers uniform, it seems there are more demands on our time than ever. Like you, we find it challenging to work fitness into our schedules. And I'm as guilty as anyone is of putting it off until tomorrow. What's the secret? There really is no secret to staying fit. But there are a lot of misconceptions about what it takes—including that physical activity takes too much time. Even a little is better than none. You don't need lots of time; just take advantage of the opportunities you have.

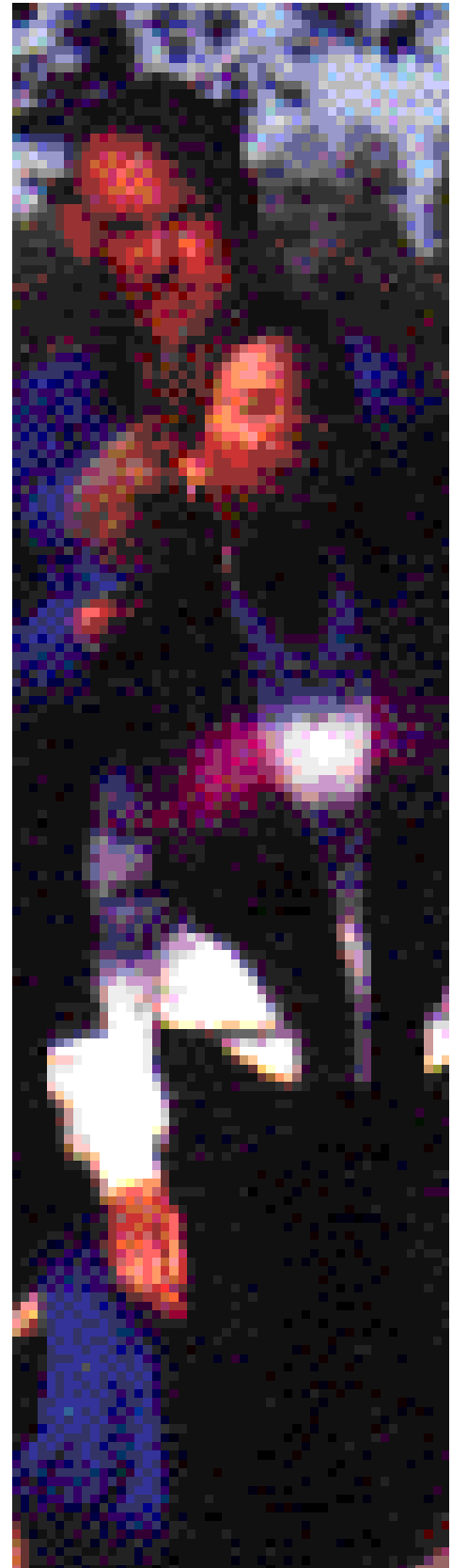
This guide is designed to help. Hopefully, it will help you realize how easy physical activity can be, and help you do it right. It's written in conjunction with my friend, noted cardiologist and exercise physiologist Dr. James Rippe, and is the latest in a series of fitness initiatives I've undertaken with the Advil Forum on Health Education, which has the goal of helping improve Americans' health and well-being.

There's no question that being more physically active is one of the best things you can do to improve your health. I hope this guide will help you accomplish your fitness goals—whatever they may be.

Good luck!



Nolan Ryan



1 WHY GET FIT?

NOLAN RYAN ON FITNESS BENEFITS...

Being active not only helps you feel good physically, but it gives you time to yourself to sort through your schedule and prepare for the pressures of your day. The better you feel about yourself, the more productive you can be — at work and at play.

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No one would argue the value of fitness to overall health. But “being fit” means different things to different people. To the professional athlete, physical conditioning is the vital link to staying in the game. To most people, it’s more a matter of meeting the demands of everyday life without getting overly tired — and handling the occasional fastball thrown your way.

The health benefits of physical fitness are both physical and mental, lowering your risk for many diseases, while helping to increase longevity and improve your self-esteem and ability to manage stress. You’ll be more productive and safe at work, and better equipped to hit home runs when they’re needed.

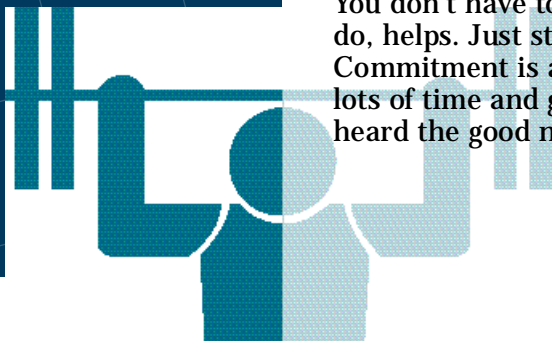
WHAT IS FITNESS?

There are several components to overall physical fitness. The primary building blocks are cardiorespiratory endurance, muscular strength and endurance, and flexibility. Other factors include your muscle-to-fat ratio (body composition), agility, sense of balance, and reaction time (especially important for sports).

The most beneficial program for overall fitness is one that addresses each of the primary fitness components:

- **aerobics for cardiorespiratory function**
- **strength training and conditioning for muscular strength and endurance**
- **stretching for improved flexibility**

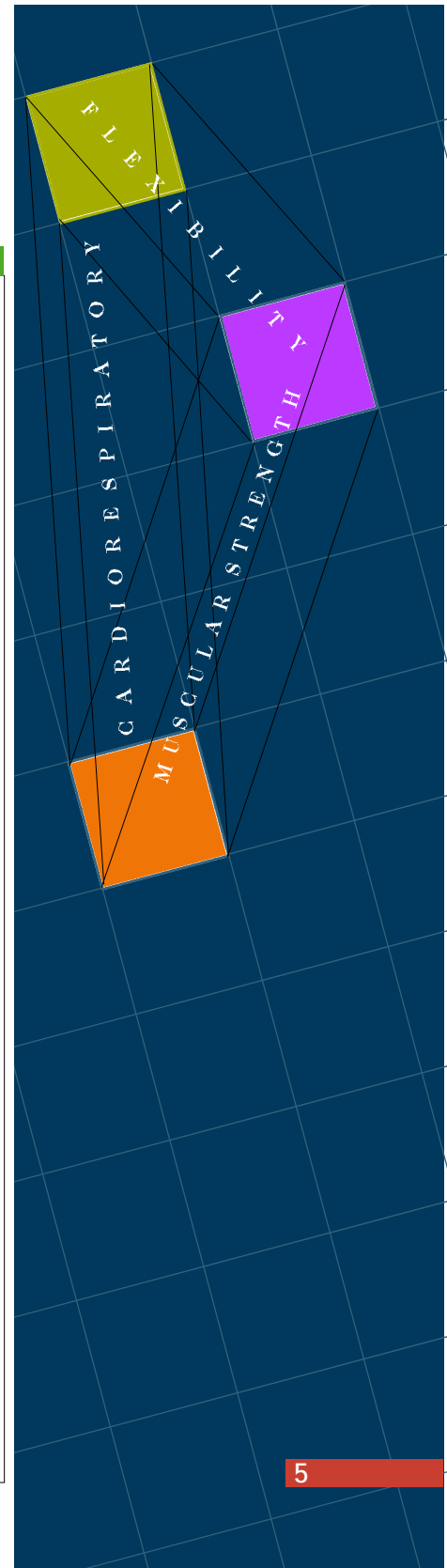
If that sounds like too much to handle, don’t despair. You don’t have to do it all every day, and every bit you do, helps. Just start slowly, and build gradually. Commitment is a must, but if you think fitness requires lots of time and grueling workout sessions, you haven’t heard the good news...



WHAT CAN BEING PHYSICALLY ACTIVE DO FOR YOU?

Here are some of the specific health benefits of regular physical activity:

- Heart Health:** Can cut the risk of heart disease almost in half, and also may help prevent major risk factors, such as obesity and high blood pressure.
- Cholesterol Control:** Can improve blood cholesterol profiles by raising HDL levels (good cholesterol) and lowering triglycerides, another fat carried in the blood.
- Muscling out Fat:** Improves the body's muscle-to-fat ratio by building or preserving muscle mass, which, in turn, increases calorie-burning efficiency to reduce body fat.
- Bone Support:** Seems to slow the bone loss associated with advancing age — a major cause of fractures in later life.
- Insulin Enhancement:** Enables the body to use insulin more efficiently, helping to control adult-onset diabetes.
- Cancer Check:** By combating obesity, appears to lower the risk of certain cancers, particularly cancers of the breast, colon and uterus.
- Aerobic Improvement:** Slows the decline in aerobic capacity (the maximum volume of oxygen the body can consume) that is associated with aging, helping to improve cardiorespiratory health.
- Weight Control:** When combined with proper nutrition, can help control weight and prevent obesity, a major risk factor for many diseases.
- Attitude Adjustment:** Reduces anxiety and depression, improves self-esteem, and helps you better manage stress.



2 MAKING ACTIVITY EASY



THE GOAL...

The minimum goal for all Americans: accumulate 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity over the course of the day, for most days of the week.

Our understanding of fitness has evolved since the “fitness craze” first took hold. Scientific evidence now clearly indicates that regular *moderate-intensity* physical activity offers many of the health benefits traditionally associated with more intense exercise.

Based on this evidence, a panel of health and fitness experts convened by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American College of Sports Medicine, and the President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, has urged Americans to lead more active lifestyles in general. The **minimum** goal for all Americans: to **accumulate** 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity over the course of the day, for most days of the week.

Moderate-intensity activity includes many of the things you may already be doing during a day or week: walking the dog, raking leaves, playing with the kids, even housework (it may not be fun, but chores, such as vacuuming, can be a workout). For many people, being more active may simply mean taking advantage of or creating opportunities for activity.

For example, walking to work — even if it means parking the car farther away than is typical — can help you accumulate “active time.” So can foregoing the elevator for the stairs, gardening or mowing the lawn with a push mower, or doing other things that can give you a “workout.” The point is not to make physical activity an unwelcome chore, but to seize the opportunities you have and make the most of them.

Of course, if your job or sport requires a higher level of fitness for success, you will need to condition yourself appropriately. In other words, train to meet the specific demands of your lifestyle.

There’s really no mystery to fitness. And though there may be barriers, there are also solutions. (See sidebar.) Once you commit yourself, the barriers to fitness will be easily surmountable, and the rewards of better living will be yours.



NOLAN RYAN ON GETTING ACTIVE...

“You never reach a point where it's too late to start getting active. No matter what you've done previously, you can improve the chance for longevity and quality of life by getting into the habit of regular physical activity.”

NOLAN RYAN ON
FINDING TIME FOR
FITNESS...

Now that my career doesn't depend on physical conditioning, I find it challenging to find the time to exercise. My strategy is to write it into my calendar, and not book anything to interfere with those times.



BARRIER **SOLUTIONS**

No time

Work it into your day:

- Get up a little earlier for a fun physical activity.
- Walk to work and at work.
- Use the stairs.
- Throw the ball with the dogs/play with pets.
- Walk during your lunch break.
- Write physical activity into your calendar, and don't book conflicting appointments.
- Ride a stationary bike while watching television or reading.
- Walk home.

Can't get motivated

Fitness will never be a priority until you make a commitment to it. Some things that can help:

- Read books and/or magazines on fitness to inspire you.
- Identify people you look up to who are fit, and use them as role models.
- Set specific, short-term goals, and reward yourself when you achieve them.
- Do it for yourself.
- Associate with friends who believe in fitness for mutual support.

BARRIER	SOLUTIONS
Boredom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Vary your activities so you don't tire of one. ■ Enlist a friend or family member as an exercise partner. ■ Use different jogging, walking, or biking paths for scenic variety. ■ Choose activities you really enjoy, that are fun and offer a reward, such as hiking for a great view, or walking to a friend's house. ■ Make activities into social occasions, such as tennis "tournaments" among friends. ■ Earn one or more Presidential Sports Awards.
Don't know where to start	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Start by making the most of the activities you do already: increase their frequency, duration, or intensity. ■ Ask a friend — someone who has the experience and is willing to help you. ■ Go to health fairs, sports expositions, clinics; learn from the variety of offerings presented. ■ If you've been inactive for a long time, start off slowly. Walk for 10 minutes, or just around the block. ■ Match your activity to your fitness level. ■ Don't concern yourself with fancy equipment or health club memberships. Just ACTIVATE.

RUTH RYAN ON FINDING TIME FOR FITNESS...

“When I had two babies and a toddler and no one to watch them, I just didn't seem to have the time to be out walking or running. I had to learn to adapt. I would go to the high school track, where I would let them play in the center while I jogged, so I could watch them while I worked out. Or I worked in 'active time' while doing chores around the house.

3 FITNESS GAME PLAN

RUTH RYAN ON FITNESS GOALS...

I've always been concerned with being fit and feeling good, and I do sometimes feel pressure to try to keep up with Nolan physically. But my goals have always been different from his; I work out for myself only, and concentrate on achieving what I want to do.

Now that you're convinced that being more active is within reach, there are some things you should know before jumping into fitness:

1. USE CAUTION

Physical activity should not be hazardous to your health; consequently, it's sometimes advisable to consult a physician first. Refer to the "Preparticipation Checklist" to see if you should.

Answer the following questions before beginning an exercise program:

QUESTION	ANSWER
Has a doctor ever said you have heart trouble?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Do you suffer frequently from chest pains?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Do you often feel faint or have spells of severe dizziness?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Has a doctor ever said your blood pressure was too high?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Has a doctor ever told you that you have a bone or joint problem, such as arthritis, that has been or could be aggravated by exercise?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Are you over the age of 65 and not accustomed to exercise?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Are you taking prescription medications, such as those for high blood pressure?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a good medical reason, not mentioned here, why you should not follow an activity program?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If you answer "yes" to any question, you should consult with your doctor <i>before</i> beginning an exercise program.	
<i>Source: British Columbia Dept. of Health</i>	

2. DETERMINE YOUR CURRENT LEVEL OF FITNESS

Knowing where you stand will help you design a program that isn't so difficult that it causes injury or frustration, or so easy that it fails to meet your needs. Completing the "Activity Assessment" will give you a good sense of where you are now and how to begin.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ASSESSMENT

Use the number (0-7) that best describes your general activity level for the previous month.

I do not participate regularly in programmed recreation, sport or heavy physical activity.

- 0 Avoid walking or exertion, e.g., always use elevator, drive whenever possible instead of walking.
- 1 Walk for pleasure, routinely use stairs, occasionally exercise sufficiently to cause heavy breathing or perspiration.

I participate regularly in recreation or work requiring modest physical activity, such as golf, horseback riding, calisthenics, gymnastics, table tennis, bowling, weight lifting, and yard work.

- 2 10-60 minutes per week.
- 3 More than one hour per week.

I participate regularly in heavy physical exercise, such as running or jogging, swimming, cycling, rowing, skipping rope, running in place or engaging in vigorous aerobic activity type exercise, such as tennis, basketball or handball.

- 4 Run less than one mile per week or spend less than 30 minutes per week in comparable physical activity.
- 5 Run 1-5 miles per week or spend 30-60 minutes per week in comparable physical activity.
- 6 Run 5-10 miles per week or spend 1-3 hours per week in comparable physical activity.
- 7 Run more than 10 miles per week or spend 3 hours per week in comparable physical activity.

Assessment

If you rated 0-3, start your exercise program with about 10 minutes of continuous activity each session.

If you rated 4 or above, try to exercise for 30 minutes or more each session.

NOLAN RYAN ON BUILDING A FITNESS PROGRAM...

Being successful at fitness requires the ability to adapt. You shouldn't outline a program and then etch it in stone; make modifications to enhance it. That's always been my approach.

*(from Nolan Ryan's
Pitcher's Bible)*

3. DEFINE YOUR GOALS

Decide what you want out of a fitness program and set goals. Doing so will keep you on track and help you motivate yourself to achieve the goals you set.

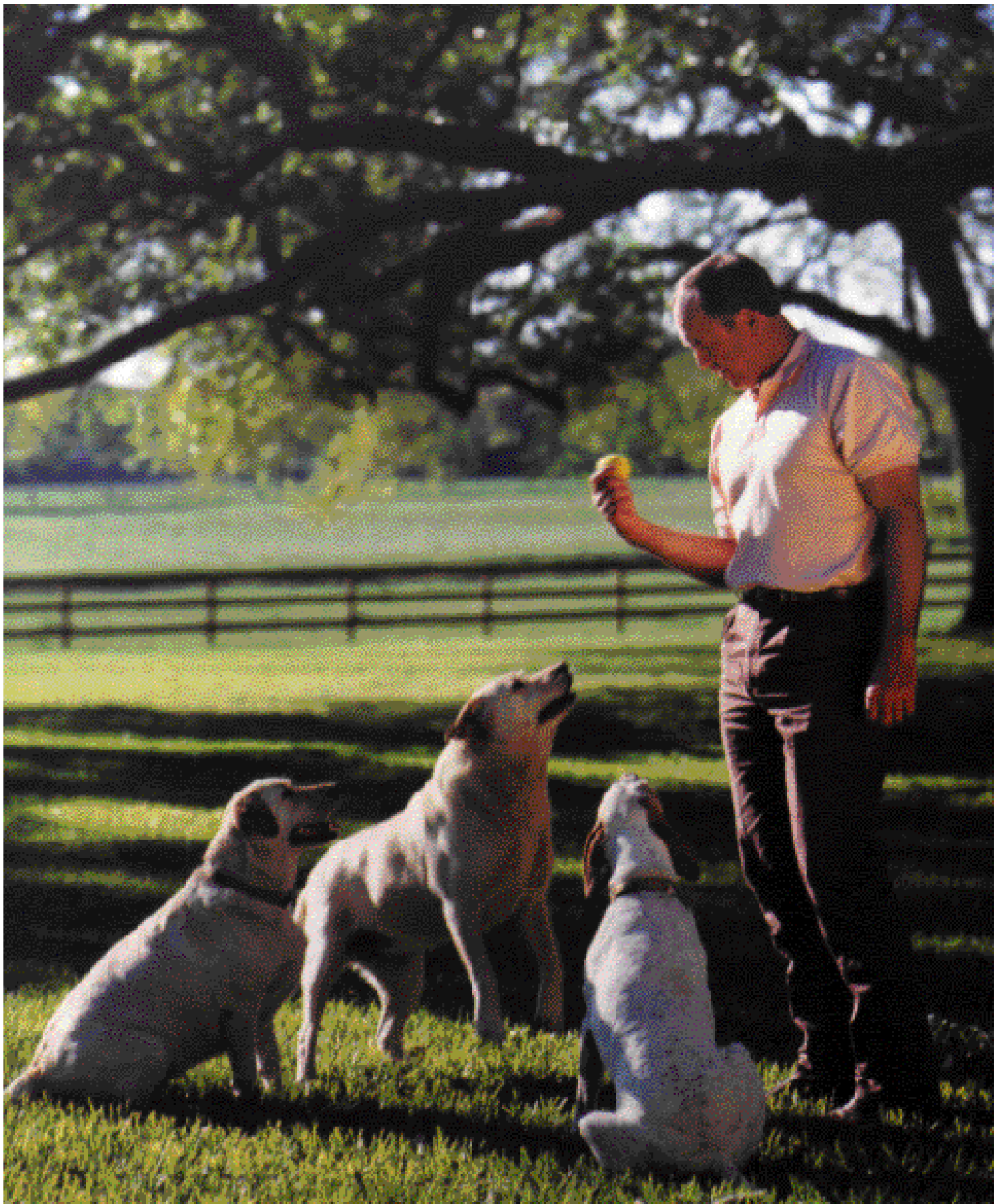
4. DESIGN A PROGRAM

Build a fitness program based on your needs and abilities (as defined by your fitness assessment), and on your desires (as defined by your personal goals). Take into consideration the time you have available and the activities you enjoy.

5. TRACK YOUR PROGRESS

Keeping track of your progress will not only keep you focused on your goal, but can help keep you motivated, as you witness how far you've come. Then you can reward yourself for a job well done!

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S



4 FIT FOR LIFE

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE (OR TOO EARLY) TO START...

RUTH RYAN ON GETTING KIDS TO BE ACTIVE...

“Though we never pushed our children into sports, we've been lucky to have three healthy kids who have always been interested in fitness. I'm sure the fact that Nolan and I try to stay active has influenced them somewhat.”

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Fitness has no age limits. The more we learn, the clearer it is: physical activity is vital to every stage of life.

FIT KIDS: IN A LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN

Though young children seem to have boundless energy that makes them the envy of many adults, children of the 1990s may be less fit than at any other time in history. One study showed that some 40 percent of U.S. children have at least one major risk factor for heart disease by the age of 12. Obesity and physical inactivity in children are linked to a host of health problems in later life.

Children benefit immensely from fitness activity, and there is evidence that habits formed early in life are likely to last throughout. Perhaps the best way to teach children the value of fitness is by example: kids who grow up in households with inactive adults are likely to be the same, and one of the biggest fitness motivators for any age is having physically active role models. Parents take note: by staying active you're not only keeping yourself fit and healthy, you're helping your kids live healthier, too.

EXTRA INNINGS: ACTIVITY AND AGING DO MIX

It's now clear that regular physical activity can help you live longer and improve your quality of life as you age. And it doesn't need to be strenuous to improve health; moderate-intensity physical activity performed over the course of the day can offer significant health benefits for people of all ages. Activities like walking may be the safest types of exercise for older or previously inactive people, because they put less stress on muscles and joints.



POST-40 FITNESS: FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH??

As our bodies age, we experience a number of physiological changes. These so-called “effects of aging” include:

- reduced aerobic capacity;
- weakened bones, through bone loss or osteoporosis, which can make one more prone to fractures;
- diminished muscular strength and endurance;
- decreased sense of balance;
- slowed reaction times; and
- increased body fat, typically a result of slower metabolism — the body’s calorie-burning mechanism.

The good news is that a wealth of data indicate that such effects may be more a factor of inactivity than of aging per se, and, in fact, may be attenuated by regular physical activity. So, while activity may not hold the miracles of the elusive “fountain of youth,” it can certainly go a long way toward increasing longevity and improving day-to-day function as you age.



NOLAN RYAN ON AGING...

The aging process is affecting me the way it does a lot of people, with aches and pains and stiffness. Though I found that I couldn't stop the process through physical activity, I did find that I could compensate for it by maintaining my level of fitness.

5 ON DECK FOR ACTIVITY

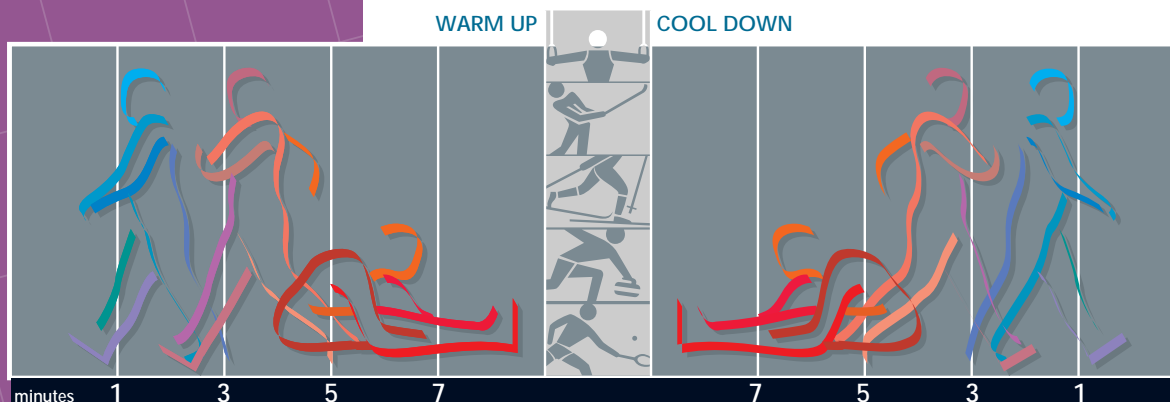


Remember, “fitness” can be defined in many ways, depending on your goals, your current level of activity, and how much time you have available. A program that includes aerobics, resistance training and stretching will give you the greatest overall health benefits. But, if you can’t do it all, don’t sweat it! Remember the latest health advice: **accumulating 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity over the course of a day** can add up to significant health benefits. The important thing is to do **something**, as opposed to nothing.

If you can do more, terrific! The formula above is the **minimum**. The following sections will help you select activities to build a well-rounded, efficient and safe routine. Before you jump into any fitness activity, though, check out “The Basics” for some crucial points that will help you get the gain without the pain.

THE BASICS: PRINCIPLES FOR PAIN-FREE FITNESS

Perhaps the two most important things to remember are: **WARM UP FIRST, COOL DOWN LAST**. These two crucial steps, with stretching as an integral element in both, will help you improve your health through fitness without suffering unnecessary pain or injury.



WARM UP

- What?**
1. Two to five minutes of low-level aerobic activity **prior** to your workout, starting slowly and gradually increasing in intensity.
 2. Gentle, static stretching exercises that work the major muscle groups. (For more stretching guidelines, see page 22.)

- Why?**
- Increases your body temperature to literally warm up muscle fibers.
 - Warm muscles, tendons and ligaments are more fluid, so they stretch and contract more easily, which help make them stronger and decrease the risk of injury.
 - Gets the heart pumping faster, which helps increase blood flow to muscles.

COOL DOWN

- What?**
1. Two to five minutes of continued mild activity after exercise, gradually decreasing in intensity.
 2. Slow stretching exercises to restretch the muscles.

- Why?**
- Gradually slows down the heart's pumping action to prevent blood from pooling in lower muscles, which reduces blood flow to the heart and brain, and can cause faintness, or worse.
 - Cool-down stretching can also prevent muscle stiffness and soreness by restretching muscles that are shortened during exercise.

6 AEROBICS

THE HEART
OF THE
MATTER

RUTH RYAN ON
STARTING AN
AEROBIC ACTIVITY...

“When I first started jogging, I was out of breath almost immediately, and my legs were weak. I knew I was out of shape and my cardio-respiratory ability was very low. But, within 6 or 8 weeks I could run a mile, and I felt so much better, I knew I had to keep it up.”



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Aerobic activity should be the cornerstone of any fitness program, with other activities added to this core. The key function of aerobic exercise is to make the heart muscle stronger and more efficient, helping you achieve the first component of the fitness formula: cardiorespiratory endurance.

Exercise scientists have devised specific formulas for realizing the full potential of aerobic exercise, specifying how much, at what intensity, for how long, and at what heart rate activity should be performed. Though these criteria are important, many people may view them as asking too much, and they can overwhelm or frustrate the beginner.

TAKE THE FIRST STEP TOWARD FITNESS

Most of us need to take a simpler approach: do **something**. The first step is just being more active — even if it's only a little. Start by walking; it can always be worked into your day. Anyone can do it any time, in almost any place, without any special equipment. The opportunities are plentiful: go for a walk after dinner instead of watching television; walk to work; walk to the store rather than driving; or take the dog or the kids for a long walk. A moderately brisk pace is preferable, but build up to it gradually.

Of course, there are lots of other activities besides walking that will give you the benefits of an aerobic workout, and you should pursue as many as you can and want to. Choose the ones you enjoy most, and have a great time while you get in shape. Here are some other suggestions:

Jogging	Tennis
Swimming	Cycling
Rowing	Dancing
Walking	

The greatest long-term benefits of aerobic activity can be realized by sticking closely to the criteria below:

- F = Frequency: three to five times per week
- I = Intensity: strenuous enough to raise the heart rate to the “target zone,” or between 60% and 85% of your maximum heart rate (see below, “Finding Your Target”)
- T = Time: 20 to 60 minutes per session

These are good goals to work toward, but remember, it's better to do a little bit — even if it doesn't meet these standards — than to do nothing at all.

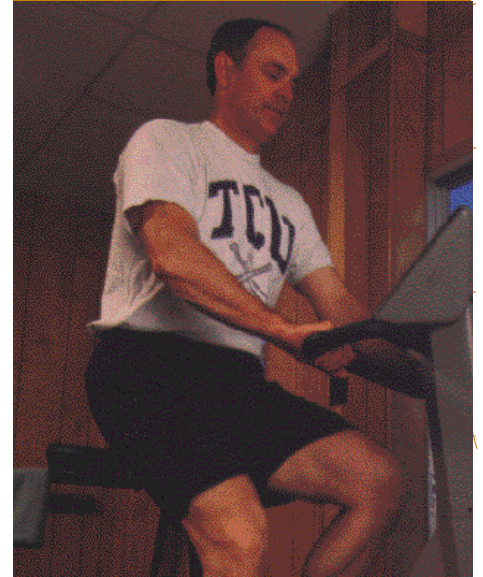
To find your “target heart rate” — the zone in which aerobic exercise will be most beneficial:

- First determine your **maximum heart rate (MHR)** by subtracting your age from 220.
- Multiply your MHR by .65 (65%) to determine the minimum aerobic training rate. Next, multiply your MHR by .8 (80%) for your maximum aerobic training rate.
- The numbers in between are your target rate, expressed in beats per minute.

For example, a 42-year-old would subtract 42 from 220 to get 178; then multiply 178 by .65 to determine the lower threshold of the target zone, or 116. Then he/she would multiply 178 by .8 for the upper threshold, or 142. The target heart rate of a 42-year-old, then, is between 116 and 142 beats per minute.

To see if you're on target during exercise:

- Count the number of pulse beats at wrist or neck for 15 seconds, then multiply by four to get your beats per minute.
- Compare to your target zone. If your heart beat is faster than the maximum, you're probably overdoing it. Slow down.



NOLAN RYAN ON AEROBICS...

A lot of people were amazed to see me on an exercise bicycle immediately after a game, while my arm was being iced. . . . I did it to cleanse my muscles of lactic acid and get an aerobic benefit that pitching can't give me, and to stay on course with my training.

7 WEIGHT TRAINING:

NOT JUST FOR BODY BUILDERS

RUTH RYAN ON WEIGHT TRAINING...

I'm not interested in building up bulky muscles, but weight training is an integral part of my routine. If you combine weight training with flexibility and aerobics, and your program is balanced enough, you don't have to be concerned about developing over exaggerated muscles.

NOLAN RYAN ON STRENGTH TRAINING...

I'm a firm believer that you're only as strong as your weakest link, so I'm careful not to do just upper-body and leg work, but also abdominal training. I don't want to break down in any area. (from *Miracle Man*)

If you think lifting weights is just for pumped-up hard-bodies who flex their “pecs” in public, think again. Building muscle benefits everyone — man or woman, at any age. In fact, older people may have the most to gain from weight or resistance training, because strength is so crucial to functioning independently.

Weight training will give you the strength and endurance to perform daily tasks more efficiently and safely—during work, errands and recreation. It can also:

- improve your body's muscle-to-fat ratio, helping you burn calories more efficiently and lose weight;
- help prevent injuries, especially to the arms, legs, and back;
- balance aerobic exercise; and
- promote a smooth, toned appearance.

If you're just beginning, talk with a professional who can help you test your strength and recommend the best exercises for your ability and objectives. Improper lifting or lifting too much at one time can cause injury. (See “Strengthening Strategies” for key considerations to keep in mind.)

SAMPLE WEIGHT-TRAINING PROGRAM FOR BEGINNERS (adapted from Dr. James M. Rippe's “Fit for Success”)

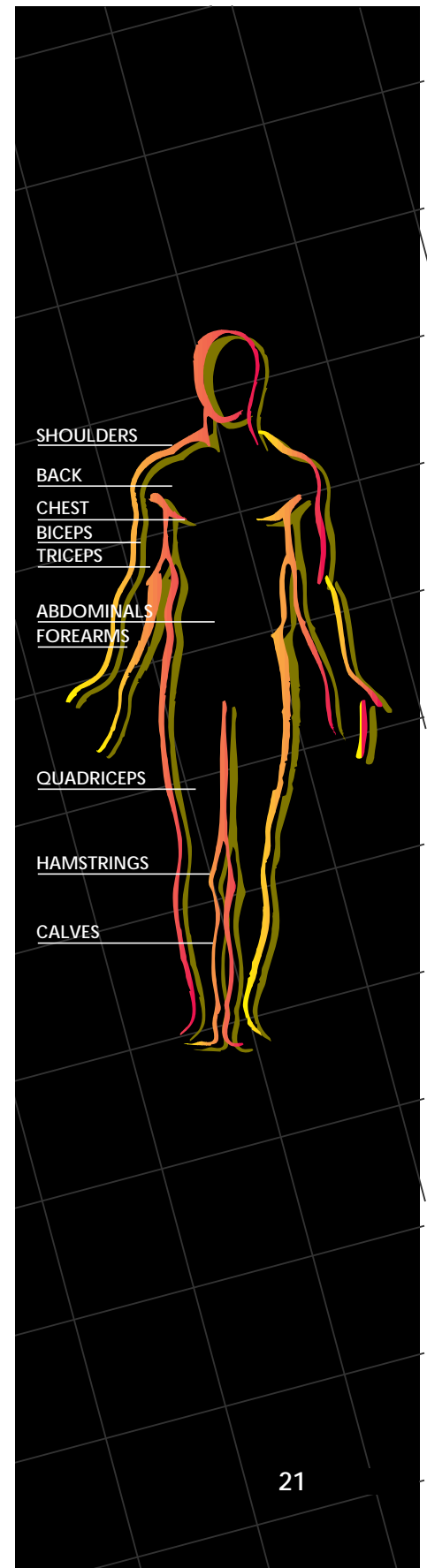
Beginners should start under the guidance of a professional, and should attempt one set of each exercise using a weight appropriate to their abilities. Those at an intermediate or expert level should increase the number of sets to two and three, respectively.

EXERCISE	MUSCLES USED	REPETITIONS
Bench Press	Chest	10
Bent-Over Rows	Back	10
Quadriiceps Extension	Quadriceps	10
Upright Row	Shoulders	10
Hamstring Curls	Hamstrings	10
Abdominal Crunches	Abdominals	*
Biceps Curl	Biceps	10
Toe Raises	Calves	10
Triceps Extension	Triceps	10
Wrist Curls	Forearms	10

* *Start with 70 percent of the maximum number you can perform in one minute (for example, if the most abdominal crunches you can do in one minute is 10, start by doing seven.)*

STRENGTHENING STRATEGIES

- First, get proper instruction on the best type, weight, and number of repetitions you should perform.
- Try to include at least one exercise for each of the major muscle groups.
- Work the larger muscle groups first (e.g., chest, back, quadriceps), then work the smaller groups.
- Alternate among upper-body, lower-body, and trunk (abdominal) exercises.
- Allow at least one day between weight-training sessions to enable muscle fibers to rejuvenate, but try to train at least twice a week.
- Don't overdo it. If you can't perform 10 repetitions, then you're probably trying to lift too much weight. Start with a lesser amount and work up.



8 STRETCHING

REACH FOR
FLEXIBILITY

Stretching, though often overlooked, plays a vital role in keeping muscles and joints strong and pliable so they are less susceptible to injury. That's why it's such an important part of warming up before physical activity and cooling down after.

Spending a few minutes a day doing slow, deliberate stretches can also help you manage stress more effectively — giving you a chance to momentarily shut off outside stressors, and focus, physically and mentally, on your activity.

Books and articles describing specific stretches abound. A good routine should work each of the major muscle groups, and needn't take long. Five to 10 minutes is all you need. Be sure to scan the "Rules to Stretch By" before you begin.

RULES TO STRETCH BY

- Warm up first: warm muscles, tendons, and ligaments are more flexible and stretch more easily; stretching "cold" muscles can cause tears.
- Stretches should always be gradual and gentle.
- Hold each stretch in a static position for 10 to 20 seconds, allowing the muscle to lengthen slowly.
- Do not bounce; bouncing actually causes muscle fibers to shorten, not lengthen.
- Stretch only to the point of resistance; if the stretch hurts, you're pushing too hard.
- Don't rush through the stretching routine; use it to prepare yourself mentally and physically for activity.



9 SPORTS INJURIES

HOW TO STAY IN THE GAME

RUTH RYAN ON USING CAUTION...

Listen to your body. The older you get, the more important these words are. Take the time you need to warm up and cool down, and don't rush into things. If I have less time than usual to exercise, I adjust my routine accordingly, so that I'm not trying to do too much.

Nothing is more frustrating than finally getting involved in an activity you enjoy, only to hurt yourself and be forced into a prolonged rehabilitation period. Although some injuries may be unavoidable, proper conditioning and attention to the details of warm-ups, cool-downs, and stretching will help keep you off the disabled list.

AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION...

Preventing injuries requires both common sense and careful preparation. By following a few basic principles, you can help ensure that your activity won't put you out of commission.

- **Warm Up:** This is the number one tenet of injury prevention, consisting of three to five minutes of low-level activity followed by a few minutes of stretching. (See page 17.)
- **Stay Flexible:** Stretching during the warm-up and cool-down phases will help prevent muscle pulls and strains, as well as the general aches and pains that can occur after exercising.
- **Build Gradually:** Start out slowly and build up gradually in intensity and duration of activity. "Weekend athletes" are famous for trying to do too much, too soon. Don't fall into this trap.
- **Be Prepared:** Use the right equipment for your sport, whether it's a good pair of running shoes, or knee pads for roller-blading. Be sure it's in good condition and is appropriate for your skill level (e.g., skis for beginners vs. experts).
- **Rehydrate:** Water is the best sports drink and you should drink plenty of it before, during and after exercise — especially in warm weather. Keep drinking it throughout the day.
- **Avoid Extremes:** Try not to exercise outdoors in extreme hot or cold weather, but, if you do, be sure to dress properly. Use caution against heat exhaustion or, at the

other extreme, frostbite.

- **Cool Down:** Gradually decrease the intensity of your activity to restore a normal heart rate. Postexercise stretching should not be overlooked. (See page 17.)

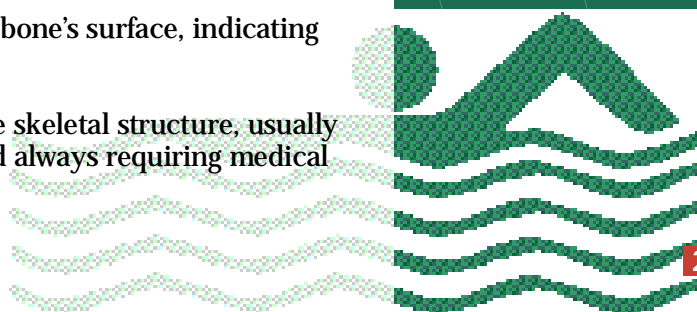
INJURY IDENTIFICATION

Being physically active shouldn't be painful, but occasionally, injuries do occur. The most common ones are often what sports physicians call "overuse" injuries — usually a result of trying to do too much, too soon.

General muscle aches and pains are normal when you start a new activity or increase the intensity or duration of exercise, although proper stretching during the cool-down phase can help prevent much of the "day-after" muscle soreness. Pain in joints or ligaments, on the other hand, is typically cause for concern. (Refer to "When to See a Doctor," page 27.)

The most common types of injuries are:

- **Muscle pulls and strains:** Tears in tendon and muscle fiber, due most frequently to improper stretching.
- **Sprains:** Tears in the ligaments that connect bones. These tears typically occur when joints are suddenly turned in an awkward manner with some force.
- **Tendonitis:** Inflammation of the tendons that can impair joint movement, usually caused by overuse or improper technique.
- **Stress fractures:** Cracks in the bone's surface, indicating trauma just short of a break.
- **Broken bones:** Fractures to the skeletal structure, usually obvious due to severe pain, and always requiring medical attention.





R

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SELF-TREATMENT GUIDELINES

Fortunately, many of the most common injuries can be treated at home, after you've assessed the severity of the injury and have determined that medical advice is not required. (Refer to "When to See a Doctor," page 27.) For strains and sprains, the most commonly recommended guidelines are easily remembered by the acronym **R-I-C-E**, for Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation:

- **Rest** the injured area immediately to cut down on blood circulation to that part of the body;
- **Apply ice** immediately, which shrinks blood vessels and reduces swelling;
- **Compress** the injured area with an elastic bandage or cloth to also help reduce swelling; and
- **Elevate** the damaged part to a level higher than the heart.

WHEN TO SEE A DOCTOR

Let common sense guide your decision about whether to seek medical attention, using the degree of pain and the circumstances of the injury as guidelines. Generally, see a doctor if:

- pain is extreme or persistent;
- you've suffered trauma to any joint, possibly affecting underlying connective tissue;
- an injury does not heal in a reasonable time;
- you develop an infection or fever; or
- you're unsure about the severity of the injury.



10 HITTING A GRAND SLAM!

NOLAN RYAN ON
STARTING...

“The most important thing to remember is this: your age or physical condition doesn't matter. It's not too late to start. Start by doing even the least little bit. You shouldn't expect to get fit in a week or 10 days. It's not a temporary thing; it's got to be a part of your lifestyle, a life-long commitment. And it will be, if you just get started.”

Now that you know just how easy being more physically active can be, the only thing left is to **DO IT**. Just think about all the great things being physically fit will do for you and your health and well-being, and **ACTIVATE YOURSELF**. Involve your spouse, your family, your friends — anyone and everyone that you can. Start incorporating more active pursuits into your lifestyle, and before you know it, activity will be the most natural and enjoyable part of your day. Every single day you do something physically active — even if it's just walking home from work — is one day closer to realizing the mental and physical benefits of fitness.

And that can make you feel like you hit a grand slam in the World Series! Good Luck.

