

## **Start Walking!**

by Celeste Lee

In your mind, how do you see yourself? Are you just living life in a reclining chair? Are eating and sleeping the two high points of your day? Does getting up from your chair and turning off the television get you out of breath? Was your last walk the one you took down the aisle on your wedding day? When you wake up in the morning, are you frustrated that you must get up, rather than happy you even woke up? Are you living life as an observer? and never as a doer? Is it easier to stay home than to go somewhere? Are you just existing in life, and is it passing right on by you without your ever getting anything done? Is it more enjoyable to be depressed than to exercise?

If you answered "yes" to any of the above questions, you need to get in shape—\_first, in your attitude, and then, physically. God created the human body to be active. He did not create us to sit all day under artificial lights, eating junk food and breathing stale air. When God created Adam, He gave him the task of keeping a garden. Have you ever kept a garden? It is very physical work. Thus God insured that Adam exercised and received the benefits from being active.

The body has over 600 muscles, and the rule with muscles is that if you don't use them, you lose them. Muscles that are strong hold the bones and body organs in their proper places. Muscles that are weak do not hold things in their proper places, and thus we end up with backaches, bad posture, swaybacks, extended stomachs, slouched shoulders, and other weak areas. These, in turn, result in frequent sprains, strains, pains, pulls, and dislocations.

Ask any health expert—nutrition specialist, medical doctor, naturopath—they all will tell you that exercise is one of the most important requirements to regaining and maintaining health. Three main things shorten our lives—too much stress, poor eating habits, and lack of exercise. The three most important contributions to health are rest, nutrition, and exercise. Notice that exercise is vitally important for a healthy life. Why is exercise so important, and how does it affect the body?

The body is made up of cells. Cells, in turn, make up tissues; and tissues, in turn, make up the organs of the body. Every function carried on by the body is directly related to the life of the cells. Each muscle in the body is made up of individual muscle cells. Since all cells require energy to function, any movement by these muscle cells requires energy. All cells use amino acids and fatty acids combined with a glucose and oxygen to make energy. Amino acids come from protein, and fatty acids come from fats, while glucose comes from sugar and oxygen from the air we breathe. Thus, for the muscle cells to function, they need a sufficient amount of acids, glucose, and oxygen. The more energy the muscle cells burn due to exercise, the more acids, glucose, and especially oxygen is necessary to allow the cells to continue moving in exercise.

Oxygen can only be supplied to the muscles through the red blood cells. When muscles are being used in good exercise, the heart must pump more blood through the body to supply the extra need for oxygen. This, in turn, causes the lungs to be expanded to fill the need of oxygen required by the red blood cells being quickly moved through the body.

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Leviticus 17:11 says, "The life of the flesh is in the blood." What is in the blood constitutes life; and if there is life in the blood, but bad circulation, the entire system cannot receive the life it needs. Each cell in the body requires nourishment and cleansing from its own wastes to be healthy. Nutrients are delivered to each cell through the blood stream, and, in turn, the wastes are picked up and deposited in the eliminating organs. Thus we can understand the statement, "Perfect health depends upon perfect circulation." (2T 531). "The more active the circulation, the more free from obstructions and impurities will be the blood." (*Healthful Living*, p. 178). Why? Because the blood is constantly removing the wastes to the eliminating organs for elimination.

How does exercise result in good circulation? Due to the fact that the muscles are requiring more oxygen to create energy, the body naturally increases the amount of oxygen inhaled. The heart rate increases as it pumps the blood through the system faster to supply the necessary oxygen to each muscle. Thus the circulation of the blood is greatly increased. This increase in circulation has a twofold benefit to the body. First, an abundant supply of oxygen is taken not only to the muscles, but also to every part of the system. And second, the blood is circulated through the eliminating organs at a much greater amount, thus resulting in an increase in the elimination of the body's wastes. Both of these are essential for good health and healing.

The entire body is enhanced due to a regular exercise program. Exercise benefits the whole system, but let us notice in what ways the heart and lungs are especially benefited from it. This type of exercise is called cardiopulmonary exercise. (What is involved in cardiopulmonary exercise will be shown later).

- It increases the stroke volume, the amount of blood pumped with each heart beat.
- It decreases the pulse rate, thereby giving the heart more time to rest between beats.
- It decreases one's risk of death in the event of a heart attack.
- The lungs are expanded and thus strengthened to supply fresh oxygen to the entire system. Perhaps the most important benefit is that of increased circulation. Other benefits realized by the whole body due to the increase of circulation are:
  - The liver, kidneys, and lungs will be strengthened to perform their work.
  - Exercise invigorates the mind.
  - Digestion is aided, a diseased stomach is relieved, and the bowels are strengthened for correct elimination.
  - Impurities are expelled from the system.
  - The skin expels impurities that otherwise would have to be expelled by the excretory organs, and the skin is given a healthy glow.

These are all very important to the body, but they tend to be general effects. What about some specific problems and the results exercise will give?

### HEART DISEASE:

**High cholesterol**—Exercise causes an increase of HDL cholesterol, the "good" cholesterol that keeps the "bad" LDL from clogging the arteries. Even walking at a leisurely pace of three miles per hour, five times a week, raises HDL cholesterol.<sup>1</sup>

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**High blood pressure**—Although the direct effect of daily exercise on blood pressure is not quite clear yet, a regular walking program facilitates weight control, helps to dissipate tension and stress, and improves the circulation.<sup>2</sup>

**Obesity**—Those that are obese have a high risk of heart disease. Exercise is the best way to control your weight. It rids the body of fat and increases muscle tone. Exercise increases the metabolism of the body, thus enabling it to burn more calories.

**Stroke**—Lack of exercise promotes the excessive ease of clotting of the blood, thus resulting in an increased risk of a stroke.<sup>3</sup>

**Overall heart functions**—Exercise increases stroke volume and decreases the pulse rate. (See above).

### **ANEMIA:**

Exercise is one of the most important treatments for anemia due to the body's response. Low tissue levels of oxygen that occur during exercise lead to the production by the liver of erythropoietin, which stimulates the bone marrow to produce red blood cells. Absorption of iron from the intestine is also increased.<sup>4</sup>

### **ARTHRITIS:**

**Osteoarthritis**—This form of arthritis causes the cartilage in the joints to wear down. Complete rest will stiffen the joints and overexertion will make them sore. A moderate amount of nonstrenuous, non-weight-bearing activities—such as swimming and range-of-motion exercises—provide remarkable relief and improve circulation and overall health.<sup>5</sup>

### **ARTHRITIS:**

**Rheumatoid arthritis**—A study at the **University of Missouri, Columbia Multipurpose Arthritis Center** shows that participants in a 12-week exercise program have improved their aerobic capacity and feel less pain and stiffness from arthritis.<sup>6</sup>

### **ASTHMA:**

Asthmatics should be encouraged to have a program of regular physical exercise. Brief exercise periods of from one to two minutes can actually open up constricted lungs, according to a report from the **Committee on Rehabilitation Therapy of the American Academy of Allergy**.<sup>7</sup>

### **BOWEL DISEASES:**

**Colitis, constipation, Crohn's, diverticulitis, and irritable bowel syndrome**—Strengthening and toning the abdominal muscles with proper exercise reduces bowel problems.<sup>8</sup> Walking is very helpful for all bowel function.

### **BACK PROBLEMS:**

75% of people with chronic back problems do not exercise and haven't for years.<sup>9</sup>

### **CANCER:**

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The lymph system fights cancer cells and removes toxins; thus it is essential that it performs at optimum ability when one has cancer. Exercise and massage are the only two things that cause the lymph system to flow. Exercise increases the flow of lymphatic fluid and also increases the number of white blood cells which fight cancer.

Researchers think that exercise boosts the immune system so that it can better fight tumor development.<sup>10</sup>

**Lung, colon, rectal**—inactive men more likely to develop these cancers.<sup>11</sup>

### **DIABETES:**

Exercise is critical to achieving good blood-sugar control. A graded exercise program should be developed, based on the individual's fitness level and interest, that elevates the person's heart rate to at least 60 percent of maximum for half an hour three times a week.<sup>12</sup> Exercising muscles have an enormous appetite for sugar. They pull it out of the blood, even with very little insulin present.<sup>13</sup>

### **STRESS:**

Exercise neutralizes stress, depleting the negative hormones and chemicals and promoting the positive ones.

### **ALL ILLNESS OR DISEASE:**

The body's defense system—the immune system—is made up of white blood cells that fight disease throughout the body. When they can not handle the problem, the lymph system is called in and hauls the offenders to the lymph nodes where they are destroyed. The resulting debris and other toxins must be eliminated through the lymph channels, which are stimulated to flow only through exercise and massage. Thus exercise is vital in all illness. Jumping on a rebounder or small trampoline is excellent to stimulate the lymph system.

### **BENEFITS OF EXERCISE SPECIFIC TO WOMEN:**

- **Reduces risk of breast cancer**—Researchers at the University of Southern California found that one to three hours of exercise per week during the reproductive years cuts breast cancer risk by 30 percent. Four or more hours of exercise each week cuts the risk by fully 60 percent.<sup>14</sup>
- **Reduces risk of osteoporosis**—Any activity that pulls and stresses the long bones of the body increases bone density and mass, but when we do not perform activities we lose bone mass. With exercise the connective tissue of the cartilage, ligaments, and tendons become more resilient and the bones more dense.<sup>15</sup>
- **Increases the calcium content in the bones**—Medical researchers of Washington University studied exercising and non-exercising women, ages 55 to 70. In nine months the non-exercising women lost 1% of their bone mineral content. After 17 months of workouts the exercisers had increased their mineral content an average of 6.2%, a significant gain. Thirteen months after they stopped exercising, the exercisers bone mineral content had dropped 4.8%, which was still better than when they started.<sup>16</sup>
- **Reduce symptoms of PMS**—Levels of the body's own painkilling endorphins and enkephalins dramatically drop prior to menstruation. This results in emotional

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upset, from feelings of irritability to anxiety, and can cause pain. A safe and easy remedy, aerobic exercise causes the body to release endorphins and enkephalins, thereby relieving pain and irritability.<sup>17</sup>

- **Enhances the hormonal system**—Both the production and use of hormones are maximized by sufficient activity.<sup>18</sup>
- **Reduces severity of hot flashes**—Perspiration may help the body to better manage the dilation during a hot flash, thus reducing its impact.<sup>19</sup>
- **Lowers level of estrogen in the body**—This aids in many female problems that are related to a high level of estrogen, such as endometriosis, fibroid tumors (slows the growth of all estrogen-dependent tumors), and fibrocystic breast disease.<sup>20</sup>

### APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE:

Now knowing how important it is to exercise, the next step is to get up off that chair and get some activity in your life! To be truly successful at exercise, you must schedule a time for it every day and stick to it just as you would any other appointment. Find a time that fits you and your lifestyle. (You may have to change your lifestyle, but it's worth it). Next choose an exercise that is right for you. You must enjoy the type of exercise you choose and be able to engage in it wholeheartedly. Start out slowly and build up your endurance and capabilities. What are some of the best exercises? They are exercises that use the majority of muscles in the body, increasing the need for oxygen in the lungs, a factor which causes the heart rate to increase. The very best exercise is walking briskly outdoors. "There is NO exercise that can take the place of walking. By it the circulation of the blood is greatly improved. Walking, in all cases where it is possible, is the best remedy for diseased bodies, because in this exercise all the organs of the body are brought into use." (3T 78). "There is no exercise that will prove as beneficial to every part of the body as walking." (*Healthful Living*, p. 130). Bicycling, swimming, skating, and jumping on the mini-trampoline are also good cardiopulmonary exercises. Beware of high impact exercises such as running, jogging, and aerobics; if done, they must be done with great care, so as not to cause injury to the body.

One last point to be made is stressing the importance of cardiopulmonary exercise. This is exercise in which the pulse rate is raised and kept up for at least twenty minutes. The safe level of the pulse rate is determined by subtracting the person's age from 200. The pulse should not exceed this amount per minute to be on the safe side. Of course, an invalid, or sick person will not have the strength to achieve this at once. This is a goal to be worked toward that will give the most benefit to the entire system.

Not only is cardiopulmonary exercise important; all movement of the body is good. So park that car a few blocks from the store or office and walk, get outside and play ball with your children, and enjoy the zest for life that exercise will give you. Exercise and enjoy life!

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3. Thrash, Agatha, M.D., *Home Remedies*, p. 157.
4. Thrash, Agatha, M.D., *Nutrition for Vegetarians*, p. 75.
5. *Reader's Digest Family Guide to Natural Medicine*, p. 343.
6. Hoover, Jerry, N.D., *Natural Medicine*, p. 88.
7. Hoover, Jerry, N.D., *Natural Medicine*, p. 87.

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8. *Reader's Digest Family Guide to Natural Medicine*, p. 378.
9. Omartain, Stormie, *Greater Health God's Way*, p. 119.
10. *UC Berkeley Wellness Letter*, 10/94.
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12. Murray, Michael, N.D., *The Healing Power of Foods*, p. 27.
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14. Barnard, Neil, M.D., *Eat Right, Live Longer*, p. 108.
15. *The Natural Way of Healing Women's Health*, p. 323 & Gladstar, Rosemary, *Herbal Healing for Women*, p. 215.
16. Paulien, Gunther, M.D., *The Divine Philosophy and Science of Health and Healing*, p. 84.
17. *The Natural Way of Healing Women's Health*, p. 136 & Gladstar, Rosemary, *Herbal Healing for Women*, p. 125.
18. Gladstar, Rosemary, *Herbal Healing for Women*, p. 215.
19. *The Natural Way of Healing Women's Health*, p. 258.
20. *Ibid*, p. 291.

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