

Therapy Thoughts:

Times, they are a changing!

This seems to ring true now more than ever. My name is Kim Hahn and I am going on 29 years of being a Physical Therapist at the Nemaha County Hospital. I have seen so many changes come about. From the world of PT moving from earning a bachelor's degree, to my master's degree, to now students graduating with a DPT (Doctor of Physical Therapy). Our skills as therapists have improved from limited diagnosis skills (when I started everyone got hot packs, ultrasound, and massage-oh my!) to being highly skilled in diagnosis and manual treatment of injuries and post-surgical issues. We rarely use hot packs or ultrasound, and our massage techniques have progressed to manual therapy techniques to improve mobility and range of motion. Even through all these changes in our world, especially the changes we have seen this past year, there is one foundation that has not changed-the need for our bodies to move!

The Department of Health and Human Services recommends getting at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity a week, or a combination of moderate and vigorous activity. The guidelines suggest we spread out the exercise over the course of a week. Greater amounts of exercise will provide even greater health benefit. But even small amounts of physical activity are helpful. Being active for short periods of time throughout the day can add up to provide health benefit. Strength training should also be performed at least 2 times a week.

If you enjoy research and reading like I do, <https://rb.gy/fki4gd> "Exercise as medicine-evidence for prescribing exercise as therapy in 26 different chronic diseases" by Pedersen and Saltin explains the research behind the benefit of exercise for psychiatric diseases (depression, anxiety, stress, schizophrenia); neurological diseases (dementia, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis); metabolic diseases (obesity, hyperlipidemia, metabolic syndrome, polycystic ovarian syndrome, type 1 and 2 diabetes); cardiovascular diseases; (Hypertension, coronary heart disease, heart failure, cerebral apoplexy, and intermittent claudication); pulmonary diseases (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma, cystic fibrosis); musculoskeletal disorders (osteoarthritis, osteoporosis, back pain, rheumatoid arthritis); and cancer. What struck me with this article is that most of the above diagnoses have no contraindications to exercise. Compare that to the contraindications and side effects of several of the medications we take to control disease processes, getting our bodies moving is an easy pill to swallow.

Physical activity has been linked to reduced risk of 16 different types of cancer. Exercise reduces pro-inflammatory cytokines and optimizes immune function linked to decreased risk for cancer, infection, and disease. Exercise/Movement improves brain health, helps with weight management, improves sleep, reduces disease, decreases anxiety, improves balance and coordination, strengthens bones and muscles, and improves the ability to do everyday activities.

What types of exercise? Higher > Lower Intensity. Aerobic (low power lasting several minutes) and Anaerobic (moderate to high power short duration –less than 2 minutes). More > Less. Reduce sedentary time. Try to hit the above exercise guidelines.

Ok- we all know that exercise is good for us, so why is it so hard to follow the recommendations? What barriers prevent us from being as active as we should be? Pain, kinesiphobia (fear of moving-yes it's really a thing), lack of time or motivation? Perhaps you're not sure where to start or what exercises would be best for your particular situation.

The Physical Therapists at Nemaha County Hospital are here to be a resource for you. Physical Therapists are movement experts who can help improve quality of life through hands on care, patient education, and prescribed movement and exercise. Talk to your doctor or reach out to us at 402 274-6126 to see how Physical Therapy can help you get moving.