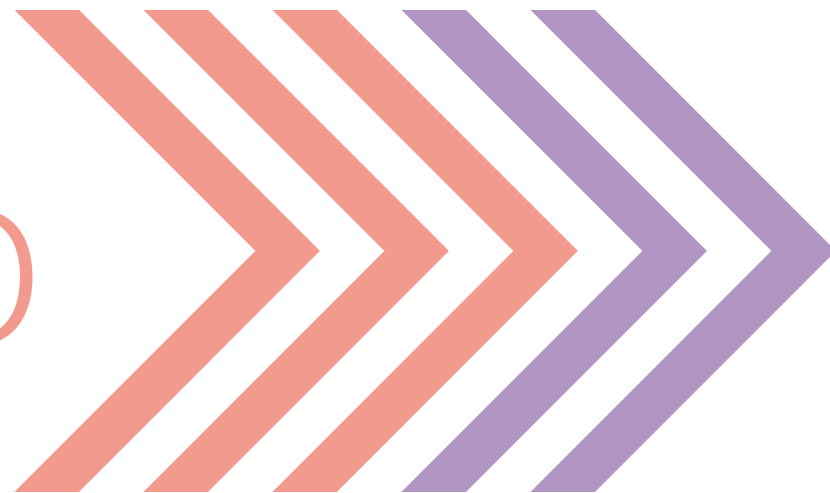




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For a strong, supple, healthy body, you need to combine strength training, flexibility exercises and aerobic workouts. Our guide shows you how...

# THREE STEPS TO FITNESS



For a really healthy body, you need to get the balance right. After all, it's no use being able to lift umpteen bags of shopping if you can't bend down to do your shoelaces, or you're out of breath after a 10-second sprint for the bus. So, pay attention to all three types of exercise: strength, endurance and flexibility. You'll find that varying your workouts keeps it more fun, too.\*

## TEST YOUR STRENGTH

- Sit on the edge of a chair, place your hands on the chair's front edge, then slide your buttocks off and away from the chair, so that just your hands support you.
- Keeping your back straight, slowly lower yourself until your upper arms are parallel with the floor, then lift back up.



**Top marks**  
If you can do 10 dips or more.

## 1 Strength training fortifies and builds muscle – especially helpful in guarding against osteoporosis – and helps maintain a healthy metabolism.

**S**trength – or weight – training is also known as anaerobic exercise, which is where the muscles must work against some form of resistance to grow and develop.

Muscle loss in older people is not due to ageing itself, but rather from a lack of activity. Good body strength, therefore, can make a big difference to your health as you get older. The great news for anyone who wants to lose weight is that the more muscle you have, the more calories you burn, even when you're not exercising.

For women, training with light weights will tone your body, as opposed to building big muscles, and the increase you get in terms of overall strength can make everyday tasks seem easier.

### Anaerobic vs Aerobic

Strength training is anaerobic exercise, which means 'without oxygen'. If you're exercising and you become breathless, but your heart rate is higher than normal for only a relatively short period of time, then that exercise is anaerobic.

Aerobic means 'with oxygen' and refers to any exercise that keeps your heart rate higher than normal for at least 20 minutes. You should aim to be mildly out of breath, but still able to carry on a conversation.

### Benefits

- Gives you power and stamina
- Develops bone mass and generates muscles
- The body can cope more easily with tasks such as lifting children and carrying heavy shopping
- Increases your metabolic rate, giving more fuel to the muscles and burning more fat
- Bone density increases: resistance training builds stronger bones and can stave off the onset of osteoporosis (brittle bones)
- Develops stronger tendons and ligaments, which weaken with age, letting you enjoy physical activity throughout your life
- Maintains muscle tone. Without strength training, the average person loses more than 0.5lb of muscle every year after the age of 25.

### Workout

If you join a gym, an instructor will show you how to use the weights equipment and tailor a routine specific to your requirements. You can also take exercise circuit training classes, or classes with names such as Body Sculpt or Body Pump, which use light weights in the routines and are popular with women.

### Work-in

You can do things around the home to develop strength. Gardening is a good form of strength building, as is shopping, so long as you carry it home instead of using the car.

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**Endurance training** can be broken down into aerobic and cardiovascular exercise. Not only does this aerobic exercise improve stamina, it also helps to keep your body's biggest organ – your skin – healthy.

### Workout

Jogging, swimming, hiking, cycling, aerobic classes (step, salsa, aqua), jogging machines and stair climbers are all good aerobic and CV exercises.

### Work-in

Cycle to work, walk to the shops, climb the stairs instead of taking the lift, walk up escalators. Hoovering and other types of housework also get your heart and lungs pumping.

**W**alking, swimming and cycling are all forms of cardiovascular (CV) exercise, as are fitness classes such as step, aqua and dancing. CV work improves your heart and lungs' ability to do their job properly. This can be anything from a 10-minute walk, to a one-hour workout or more. However, your body doesn't begin to work aerobically until after at least 20 minutes of continuous rhythmic exercise.

"If fat loss is your goal, you need to be training at a continuous level that lifts your heart rate to its aerobic training zone for a minimum of 20 minutes and, preferably, longer," says fitness professional Michael Dotchin

## Calculate your target heart rate

To work aerobically and burn off those calories, you need to elevate your heart rate to a certain level above normal and sustain it for at least 20 minutes at a time. This level is known as your target heart rate, and is 60 to 80 per cent of your maximum heart rate.

To work out your approximate maximum, subtract your age from 220: For example,  $220 - 35 = 185$ . If you're a 35-year-old, your maximum heart rate would be around 185bpm. So, to set a training zone or target heart rate of 60 to 80 per cent of your maximum, divide by 100 and multiply by the percentage: For example,  $185 / 100 \times 80 = 148$ . So 148bpm is 80 per cent of your maximum heart rate.

(see 'Calculate your target heart rate', above).

Aerobic training will improve your CV system, as will climbing a flight

of stairs. The older you are, the less effort you need to raise your heart rate.

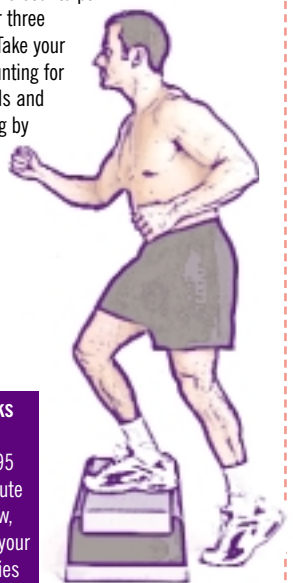
### Benefits

- Makes your heart better at pumping blood and your lungs more efficient at using oxygen
- Enables the muscles, lungs and heart to generate energy efficiently
- Increases physical stamina and fitness
- Makes the heart stronger, reducing the risk of heart disease
- Reduces body fat
- Reduces blood pressure
- Reduces blood serum cholesterol levels (or LDL levels – otherwise known as 'bad' cholesterol)
- Reduces stress.

## TEST YOUR ENDURANCE

### Step test

- Use a low bench or thick book.
- Step up with one foot, then the other, then step down with one foot, then the other. Each cycle is one count.
- Do about 20 counts per minute for three minutes. Take your pulse, counting for 15 seconds and multiplying by four.



### Top marks

If you have a pulse rate of 95 beats per minute (bpm) or below, and you're in your thirties or forties and moderately active.



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**3 Flexibility exercises** can help prevent problems caused by tight muscles, such as soreness and lower back pain. Plus, a good stretch before and after a strength or CV workout is a great way to warm up and cool down.



### How often should you exercise?

“It’s not just what you do, but how often you do it and what you want to achieve that matters,” says fitness professional Michael Dotchin...

**To lose weight:** perform aerobic exercise for a minimum of 20 minutes, three to five times a week

**To improve CV fitness:** exercise for 30 minutes (this can be broken down into three ten-minute sessions), three to five times a week.

**To improve fitness and strength:** exercise at least three times a week, for a minimum of 30 minutes. Keep putting strain on the body, so that it keeps on improving itself.

**To improve flexibility:** Always stretch before and after exercise, and practise stretching exercises daily.”

**Workout**  
Yoga, Pilates and tai chi classes.  
**Work-in**  
Devise a stretching routine from fitness videos – of any of the above classes – or magazines, and practise daily. Also, introduce stretching every day by placing items on higher shelves

**L**oss of flexibility is one of the earliest signs of ageing. Increased flexibility benefits your body during a whole range of activities, from mowing the lawn to making love.  
“You need to stretch to maintain a balance throughout your skeleton and avoid postural imbalances – all exercise classes contain stretching components,” says Michael.

- Benefits**
- Increases physical efficiency and performance
  - Decreases the risk of, or

- susceptibility to, injury
- Improves circulation and increases blood flow to the joints
- Decreases the risk of back problems by increasing the flexibility of the lumbar and pelvic regions
- Reduces stress on the lower spine
- Improves posture and muscle balance
- Improves muscle and nerve co-ordination
- Increases joint lubrication fluid
- Reduces stress.

**\* Before embarking on a new exercise regime, seek medical advice.**

### TEST YOUR FLEXIBILITY

Toe touches

- Sit on the floor with your left leg straight out in front of you, and your right foot tucked against your left thigh.
- Reach with your left arm as far as you can towards your toes.

**Top marks**  
If you can touch your toes.



## Free LA Fitness Day Pass

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**National  
Smile Week  
is from May  
12 to 18 –  
so there's no  
better time to  
brush up on  
your dental  
hygiene...**

# Clean up your act

## Did you know...?

Dentists recommend that a toothbrush be kept at least six feet away from a toilet to avoid airborne particles resulting from the flush. Yuk!

Turning off the tap when you brush your teeth can save up to two gallons of water per person, per day.

## Did you know...?

What you don't put into your mouth is almost as important as what you do. When it comes to pearly-white pegs, the top four things to avoid are...

- Tea
- Coffee
- Red wine
- Cigarettes

## 4 Swoosh after you brush

Mouthwashes help to freshen breath. Rinse and gargle for at least 30 seconds after brushing. But never use a mouthwash as a substitute for brushing and remember that:

- Mouthwashes help protect against plaque build-up, bad breath and gum disease
- They can also help protect teeth if they're sensitive to hot and cold foods and drinks.

## 5 Always floss

Flossing helps remove the plaque from those places your brush can't reach. Here's how:

- Use a see-saw motion to slide the floss between your teeth
- Move the floss up and down along each tooth three times before sliding the floss back out
- Use a clean section of floss every second or third tooth.

## 2 Get the right brush

Choosing your toothbrush is as important as looking after your teeth. These pointers will help:

- Go for a soft or medium brush, as these are kinder to your gums
- A smaller brush head will help you reach all those difficult corners
- Electric toothbrushes with timers ensure you brush for the required amount of time.

## 3 Don't overdo it

A pea-sized dose of toothpaste is enough to help protect you against tooth decay, tartar build-up and gum disease. But, remember:

- Always use a fluoride toothpaste to help avoid decay problems
- If your teeth suffer from coffee and nicotine stains, use a whitening toothpaste.

## 6 Don't be so sore

Mouth ulcers and painful sores on the gums or mouth lining are generally simple enough to treat. If you can't get to your dentist, visit:

- Your local pharmacist, who can advise you on the most suitable products, such as antiseptic pastilles and gels.

## 7 Clue up on calcium

Your teeth need lots of calcium and magnesium to stay in tip-top condition, so:

- Include plenty of calcium-rich dairy products, such as milk and cheese, in your diet
- Get your magnesium from beans, nuts and salmon.

## 8 Breathe sweetly

To help avoid everything from the common early morning bad breath, to persistent bad breath (halitosis), try the following:

- Regular brushing, flossing and rinsing with mouthwash
- Drinking plenty of water and avoiding too much tea and coffee, which can make your breath smell bitter
- Brushing your tongue can also freshen your breath.

## 9 Get wise to gums

There are many signs of gum disease. It is important to contact your dentist or speak to your pharmacist if you notice any of the following symptoms:

- Red, swollen or bleeding gums
- Persistent bad breath (halitosis)
- Pain when chewing
- Loose or separating teeth.

## 10 Visit your dentist

Regular trips to the dentist are essential, especially as:

- Regular check-ups – about once every six months – will help keep your teeth strong and healthy for as long as possible
- Dentists can even reduce the risks of serious illnesses such as cancer of the mouth, diabetes and leukaemia.

**S**mile and the world smiles with you – unless your teeth have left you with nothing to smile about, that is. Clean white teeth not only make you look healthier, they can even make you look younger!

## 1 Improve your technique

As well as brushing your teeth for at least three minutes every morning and again at night, dentists recommend that you do the following:

- Position your toothbrush at a 45-degree angle, where the teeth and gums meet
- Gently move the brush in a vibrating, back-and-forth motion, brushing two to three teeth at a time
- Always hold your toothbrush vertically when brushing the insides of your front teeth.

## ► DENTAL HELP

British Dental Association: 020 7935 0875  
www.bda-dentistry.org.uk  
British Dental Foundation: 0870 333 1188  
www.dentalhealth.org

# VITS & MINS

## VITAMIN D & CALCIUM



You are what you eat – but even with a healthy well-balanced diet, sometimes you may also need help from a food supplement. This month, we focus on vitamin D and calcium...



### ● Vitamin D: what is it?

Vitamin D is often referred to as the 'sunshine vitamin', because the body can manufacture its own vitamin D from sunshine on your skin. In technical terms, however, it's recognised as a hormone.

One of the most important jobs vitamin D does is help your body absorb calcium, which means it's important for healthy growth and development of bones and teeth. It also helps regulate the absorption of phosphorus – which is another important bone mineral – and may help relieve the skin condition, psoriasis, too.

### Food sources

Vitamin D is found in fatty fish – such as tuna, kippers, sardines, salmon and mackerel – and in liver, cheese, egg yolks and butter. Small amounts can also be gleaned from dark, leafy vegetables such as broccoli.



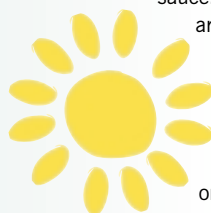
### Supplement know-how

Exposure to sunlight is an important source of vitamin D, as ultraviolet rays from the sun trigger vitamin D synthesis in the skin. Experts claim that just 10 minutes of sunshine on your skin per day is enough to make all the vitamin D you need, so there's no need to risk over-exposure to the sun.

It is wise, however, to make sure you're also getting vitamin D in your diet, especially during the winter or if you're housebound. You may also need a vitamin D supplement if you're a vegetarian or vegan, are over 55, or are breast-feeding.

The recommended daily allowance for vitamin D is 5mcg – which is the equivalent of about two canned pilchards in tomato sauce. However, older people

are often recommended to take more – up to 10mcg per day – but it's only advisable to do so under the guidance of your doctor or a qualified nutritionist.



### Are you deficient?

Without vitamin D, your bones can become misshapen, thin, brittle or soft. It prevents rickets in children and osteomalacia in adults. These are both skeletal diseases that result in bone-weakening defects and, in the case of osteomalacia, muscle weakness, too.

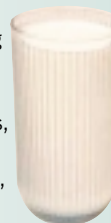
Another sign of vitamin D deficiency is constipation.

### ● Calcium: what is it?

Calcium – along with magnesium and phosphorus – helps build and maintain strong bones and develop healthy teeth and gums. Calcium is necessary for healthy nerve and muscle function, plus it's often used to relieve the symptoms of pre-menstrual syndrome.

### Food sources

Boost your calcium levels by taking plenty of the following: milk and dairy products, dark green leafy vegetables, fresh nuts, sesame seeds, broccoli, sardines (with bones), clams, fortified orange juice, lentils, beans, peas, dried figs and tofu.



### Supplement know-how

Vitamin D helps the body to use calcium, as does magnesium. The RDA for calcium is 800mg, though some people – especially pregnant or breast-feeding women – are often recommended to take up to 1,500mg daily.

### Are you deficient?

Vegetarians and vegans, plus children and teenagers who don't eat any dairy foods, may have low calcium levels. Deficiency can lead to osteoporosis (brittle bones) and has been associated with high blood pressure, colon cancer, aching joints, muscle spasms, cramps and poor bone density.

