

THE FIT 5

by Mike Perko, PhD

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE PHYSICALLY "FIT?"

Being fit is defined only by what kind of activity you do, how long you do it, or at what level of intensity. In other words, it is more than being able to run a long distance or lift a lot of weight. Overall fitness is made up of five components:

Cardiorespiratory Endurance Muscular Strength
Muscular Endurance Body Composition Flexibility

To assess your total fitness, look at all five components together:

Cardiorespiratory Endurance is the ability of the blood, heart, and lungs to supply fuel during sustained physical activity. To improve your cardiorespiratory endurance, try activities that keep your heart rate elevated at a safe level for a sustained length of time like walking, swimming, or bicycling. Start slowly and gradually work up to a more intense pace.

Muscular Strength is the ability of the muscle to exert force. Make your muscles stronger by working them against resistance, such as weights or gravity. Exercises such as lifting weights or taking stairs are great.

Muscular Endurance is the ability of the muscle to continue to perform without fatigue. Try activities such as walking, jogging, bicycling, or dancing.

Body Composition refers to the relative amount of muscle, fat, bone, and other parts of the body. Body composition is important to consider for health and managing your weight.

Flexibility is range of motion around a joint. Flexibility in the joints helps prevent injuries through all stages of life. Want to improve your flexibility? Try activities that lengthen muscles like swimming.

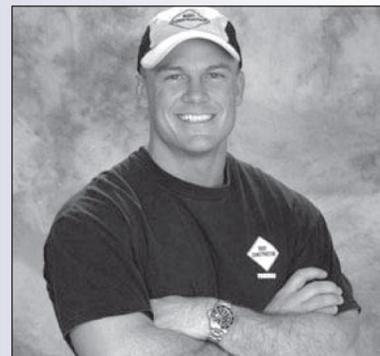
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Physical activity and health: a report of the Surgeon General. 1996.

The World's Fittest Man

Meet Joe Decker, the Guinness Book of World Records' "World's Fittest Man." Once an overweight kid who actually flunked his Army physical-training entrance exam, you might say Joe has slightly redeemed himself.

In December of 2000, over a 24-hour time period, Joe got in a little workout...

- Ran 10 miles
- Biked another 100
- Hiked 10
- Power walked 5
- Kayaked 6
- Rowed 10
- Swam 2
- Skied 10 on a NordicTrack
- Did 3,000 consecutive abdominal crunches
- 1,100 jumping jacks
- 1,000 leg lifts
- 1,100 push-ups
- Lifted a cumulative 278,540 pounds





TV NATION

HOW TELEVISION CAN HARM YOUR HEALTH



MORE THAN FOUR HOURS A DAY: that's how much television Americans watch on average. Watching TV is our most popular pastime, and it seems that we spend about as much time talking about it as we do watching. But what we don't talk about so much is how all that time in front of the television affects us as individuals and as a society.

As an abundance of evidence makes clear, our television habit has serious negative consequences. Excessive TV-watching cuts into family time, harms our kids' ability to read and perform well in school, encourages violence, and it can wreck your health.

TV Promotes Sedentary Lifestyles and Obesity

Americans, by and large, do not get enough physical exercise. We spend most of our free time watching television, which promotes obesity and its related illnesses. According to Dr. William Dietz, Director of the Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity at the Centers for Disease Control, "The easiest way to reduce inactivity is to turn off the TV set. Almost anything else uses more energy than watching TV."

The Prevalence Of Obesity Among Adults and Children is Increasing

The Centers for Disease Control report that 27 percent of adults are obese nationwide and that obesity and its attendant health risks account for an estimated 300,000 deaths a year. The proportion of young children who are obese jumped from just over 4 percent in 1965 to over 15 percent in 2003. Childhood obesity is a leading factor in the unprecedented rise of Type II ("adult-onset") diabetes among adolescents.

What's more, sedentary children risk suffering from other ailments later in life, including chronic pain, heart disease, dizziness, and migraines— as Pete Egoscue has put it, "Children whose movements are limited because they're spending their time in front of computers or televisions . . . are at risk of never fulfilling their potential."

TV-Turnoff Tips

-  Move your television to a less prominent location.
-  Keep the TV off during meals.
-  Designate certain days of the week as TV-free days.
-  Do not use television as a reward.
-  Listen to music or the radio for background noise.
-  Cancel your cable subscription and use the money for books.
-  Don't worry if children claim to be bored. Boredom passes and often leads to creativity.

