



## **General guidelines for Starting an Exercise Program**

**Before starting any exercise program, consult your doctor.**

1. **20-30 minutes/3 times a week** – Aerobic activity such as walking, biking or swimming is beneficial to your heart and lungs. To achieve the most from your fitness program, exercising 20-30 minutes a day, 3 days a week at your target heart rate is recommended.
2. **Target heart rate** – 60 to 80 percent of maximum heart rate is called target heart rate (THR). Follow this simple formula to find your THR:
  - a. Your age subtracted from 220 = maximum heart rate
  - b. 60 to 80% of maximum heart rate = target heart rate

For example: If you are 20 years old, your maximum heart rate would be 200; 60 – 80% of 200 is 120 to 160 beats per minute.

3. **Monitor your target heart rate** – Take your pulse during exercise to see if you are in your THR. Pulses can be felt on the side of the neck under the jaw or on the palm side of the wrist. Count your pulse for 15 seconds, and then multiply this number by four to find out your pulse beats per minute.
4. **Stretching** – It is important to stretch your muscles before and after exercising. Muscles that are tight can be prone to injury. Warm up 5-10 minutes, and then stretch before exercising. Repeat stretches after exercising.
5. **Make it fun!** Choose aerobic activities you enjoy. Running, dancing, hiking, jumping rope, you name it. If exercise is enjoyable, you are more likely to stick with it. Finding someone to exercise with can also help you to remain active.

More information about fitness and exercise can be found at the American Physical Therapy Association website. Link here!  
<https://www.apta.org/consumer>

## Reference

Esterson, P., Finke, R., Mirabelli, V., & Sanders, B. (n.d.). *Fitness: A Way of Life*. Retrieved June 19, 2002, from  
[http:// www.apta.org/consumer](http://www.apta.org/consumer)

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