

Balance: Key to a Successful Fitness Program

When starting a fitness program it is important to set reasonable goals around what you plan to accomplish. Balance is a key factor. Some ingredients for a balanced program include:



Consultation with your physician - Have your fitness plan approved by your physician. He or she can make suggestions about exercises that would be safe and beneficial for you.

A total-body workout - This is any form of exercise that combines resistance with cardiovascular movement. Weight training combined with running or walking is optimal.

Strength training - Using free weights or weight machines builds muscle mass, controls weight, builds energy and protects against injury. If weights aren't available, try pull-ups, push-ups and other exercises that use the body's weight to create resistance.

Aerobic exercise - Activities such as running, cycling and swimming burn excess body fat and promote cardiovascular health. So do other daily activities you normally do such as gardening, walking the dog or even house cleaning.

Flexibility exercise - Performing warm up exercises before, and stretching out after a workout prevent joint injury, relieve muscle soreness and maintain strength.

A balanced diet - An easy way to derail a balanced fitness program is to deprive the body of fuel it needs to keep going. Eat a low fat, low cholesterol diet that is high in carbohydrates and fiber.

Fun - Boredom is the greatest deterrent to a fitness program. Running endless laps or doing the same thing every week would be hard for anyone to stick with. The cure for exercise boredom is balance. Balance different things you like to do so that you have many things you can choose from. Perhaps you could do weight training on some days, garden on others and walk with a friend on others. This keeps it interesting and fun.

A **counselor or your doctor** can assist you in developing ways to motivate yourself and creating a fitness plan that is appropriate for you. Our dedicated staff is available **24 hours everyday** to address your needs. Appointments can normally be scheduled within **two working days**. **After hours** and **weekend** sessions can be arranged, if needed. Crisis calls are always handled immediately. Services are **confidential** to the extent permitted by law. To access these services call First Sun EAP at **800-968-8143** or in Greater Columbia **803-376-2668**.

For more information on this topic as well as the other benefits you receive from First Sun EAP, please visit our website at: www.firstsuneap.com.