



Press Release

Franklin VNA & Hospice Wants You to Know, May is Physical Fitness and Sports Month

Franklin – May is National Physical Fitness and Sports Month! But what does physical fitness mean? According to the CDC, “the ability to carry out daily tasks with VIGOR and ALERTNESS, without undue fatigue and with ample energy to ENJOY leisure-time pursuits and respond to emergencies”. Other definitions include being able to accomplish daily activities efficiently and effectively.

There are many benefits to physical fitness; very often people focus on appearance and weight loss, but there are so many more benefits. Physical fitness boosts brain power and focus, decreases stress, depression and anxiety, improves energy and can help ward off diseases including heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and arthritis. Plus, it can help increase your strength and endurance which can help prevent falls as we age!

Physical fitness has several components: strength, cardiac endurance, flexibility and balance. Strength comes from taxing muscles as you would do with weight lifting or fit bands, while cardiac endurance happens from raising your heart rate for an extended period of time like during running or Zumba. Flexibility, which is from stretching of muscles regularly, as you would do in yoga and balance, takes all of the above plus practice at purposeful balancing activities. You should be picturing anything from graceful ballerinas to nimble boxers for this part.

Now that you have a brief review of what physical fitness is made up of, how do you achieve it? The easiest answer is to get moving! Find an activity you enjoy and break a sweat. Or try out a new activity by joining an exercise class, walking after meals with a friend or family or even using a workout from your local library or watching it on Amazon Prime! Or design your own workout. The old standbys we learned in gym class: pushups, sit ups, squats, planking all work and don't require any equipment or special gear. These can be modified for those starting out or with mobility issues: pushups against the wall instead of the floor, wall sits instead of squats. Some other ideas? Try gardening, dancing, jumping rope or playing an active game with your kids or grandkids. The goal is to do more and do it longer to get stronger. Joining a gym can be a great motivator for some; no one wants to waste money so make it worth what you paid!

Whatever you choose, set a personal goal for yourself so you are working towards something. This can be walking two miles three times a week or lifting a set amount of weight. Maybe it's touching your toes, running a 5K, carrying your groceries comfortably into the house or playing ball with your kids or grandkids. Perhaps it's to take a yoga or spin class or just stand long enough to wash your dishes. Not sure what your goal should be? The Surgeon General recommends 30 minutes of moderate exercise, like walking or gardening, five times per week or 15 – 20 minutes of strenuous exercise like running or jumping rope. Looking to lose weight and keep it off? Up that goal to 60 minutes five times per week. Start where you are at, and work up to your goal!

The rewards of physical fitness are many, including better health, a sense of personal accomplishment, setting a great example for the next generation and maybe even building new friendships. Talk to your health care provider about the best plan for you, and then grab your water bottle and go!

You have a choice in your homecare provider. Choose local. Choose Franklin VNA & Hospice. They provide home care (nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, LNA, medical social work and homemaking services), Hospice, health clinics and community education services to Andover, Belmont, Boscawen, Canterbury, Franklin, Hill, Laconia, Northfield, Sanbornton, Salisbury, Tilton, Webster and surrounding towns, as requested. **For more information, call Franklin VNA & Hospice at (603)934-3454 or visit www.FranklinVNA.org Your choice, your local VNA.**