



Iowa Senior Olympics Newsletter: Volume II #1

This year's first Newsletter is going to focus on starting a workout routine. You will also find pictures from last year's Senior Olympics attached in a PDF document. Thank you to Jack Day for the Cycling pictures and Joel Bader for all the other pictures. We will be posting a number of different pictures with each Newsletter. In upcoming Newsletters look for information on a couple of Social Get-togethers for Senior Olympians and a first ever Wellness Seminar.

We are finally getting a break in the weather here in Iowa. Several warmer days have arrived and much of the snow has departed. We will surely have more cold and snow days ahead but the reprieve in weather gets you thinking about starting your training for this summer's 25th Anniversary Senior Olympics. You can check the website: <http://iowaseniorolympics.com/> under the "News" tab for last year's Newsletters to see training tips we have talked about before, including stretching and diet. Let's take a look at some things we can do right now.

Ideally I would tell you to start going to the YMCA or a good fitness club to start a training regime but that isn't always an option for everyone. In this issue let's talk about a way you can start conditioning and strengthening the body right in your home. Before you start a strenuous routine of exercise it is a good idea to have your yearly physical and make sure the doctor gives you the OK for any intense workouts. Remember, when starting to exercise, start easy and slow so your body is ready for it, then you can pick up the pace.

Walking, running or cycling should be part of your routine but you may still be limited in the outdoor access for a while. If you have cable TV or listen to sports radio shows you have heard and seen advertisements for exercise programs like P90X. The basic training philosophy of these programs is switching up the areas of the body you are exercising each day along with the intensity with which you do the exercises. You can do many of the same things right in your house and use some of the oldest exercises around, 'calisthenics'. Basic jumping jacks, pushups, sit-ups and burpies will really give you a workout and allow you to organize what you are going to do each time you workout. Add in jump rope, balancing, medicine ball and stretching and you can get a very good workout without leaving your basement.

There are basic principles and variables involved when setting up a workout:

- The number of exercises you wish to do.
- The number of repetitions for each exercise you do.
- The intensity with which you do the exercise.
- The number of sets you do.

You really have the flexibility of doing anything you wish for the exercises. Let's set up a basic workout routine. Do this in a place where you have some cushion, like on a carpet but not something that will slide. Your workout area should be clean and safe. Make sure you drink plenty of water before and after you exercise.

- ❖ To get the body warmed up let's walk around the house or up and down the stairs a few times, at least 3 minutes worth. Even take your dog for a walk.
- ❖ Spend another 7 – 10 minutes stretching. Look at last year's (#2 Newsletter) for some ideas on that.
- ❖ Now let's put together exercises that work different parts of the body so we get an overall workout.

Exercise	# of Repetitions	What this works
Jumping Jacks	20	Overall body and balance
Push-ups	5	Upper body
Squats (Knee bends)	10	Legs and hips
Jump Rope	15	Overall body and balance
Sit-ups / crunches	10	Abs, back
Arm Rotation	20 seconds each way	Arms
Flutter Kicks	20	Abs, Hips, back
Burpies	5	Overall Body, legs
Balancing on one leg	30 seconds each	Balance and core strength

This would be one "set". You can start your routine by doing 3-4 of the exercises then adding more as you are ready. After doing this workout you can adjust the routing by doing another set, changing an exercise, adding or reducing the repetitions or increasing the intensity of each repetition.

Jumping jack: Start in a standing position with both legs close to each other; hop up while spreading your feet apart as you hop. Keep clapping your hands over your head and then get back to the initial standing position.

Push-ups: Hands on ground under your shoulders with your feet extended behind you and your back straight. (You can be on your knees instead of your toes if you need to make it easier) Push up so that your arms are fully extended. Drop your chest back towards the ground by bending your arms then extend back up again.

Squats: Stand with feet spread apart, squat as much as possible while keeping your arms parallel to the floor. Get back to the standing posture and repeat. Other types of squats include squatting by lifting one leg off the floor in front of you and positioning both the arms in front of you for balance (mainly for lower body).

Jump Rope: You can make a good jump rope by going to a hardware store and buying a 3/4" rope

Sit-ups/crunches: Lie down on your back, position your knees at right angle. Place your hands below your head and support your head while you lift up slowly using your abdomen muscles (mainly for abdomen).

Arm rotation: Stand straight and stretch out your arms horizontally. Move your hands in a circular motion both in forward and reverse directions.

Flutter kicks: Lie down on your back and place your hands below your buttocks. Raise one leg at a time for a minimum of 6 inches from the ground. Follow leg motion similar to motion of kicking legs while swimming.

Burpies: Can be a very strenuous exercise. Do only if you have been exercising for a while. Stand with hands on hips, drop hands down on ground with your arms outside your legs, and shoot feet straight back so you end up in a push-up position. Hop and bring your feet back up between your arms, jump straight up in the air and put your arms into the air. Repeat.

You can find more calisthenics exercises on the internet and you can even make up exercises of your own, using furniture, stairs, ropes or balls. Have fun getting back into shape.

Here is a reprint from an online article the Mayo Clinic printed about exercise. It is definitely worth reading and keeping in mind when you do your planning of workouts.

1. Aerobic fitness

Aerobic exercise, also known as cardio or endurance activity, is the cornerstone of most fitness training programs. Aerobic exercise causes you to breathe faster and more deeply, which maximizes the amount of oxygen in your blood. The better your aerobic fitness, the more efficiently your heart, lungs and blood vessels transport oxygen throughout your body — and the easier it is to complete routine physical tasks and rise to unexpected challenges, such as running to your car in the pouring rain.

Aerobic exercise includes any physical activity that uses large muscle groups and increases your heart rate. Try walking, jogging, biking, swimming, dancing, water aerobics — even leaf raking, snow shoveling and vacuuming. Aim for at least two hours and 30 minutes a week of moderate aerobic activity or one hour and 15 minutes a week of vigorous aerobic activity — preferably spread throughout the week.

2. Muscular fitness

Muscular fitness is another key component of a fitness training program. Strength training at least twice a week can help you increase bone strength and muscular fitness. It can also help you maintain muscle mass during a weight-loss program.

Most fitness centers offer various resistance machines, free weights and other tools for strength training. But you don't need to invest in a gym membership or expensive equipment to reap the benefits of strength training. Hand-held weights or homemade weights — such as plastic soft drink bottles filled with water or sand — may work just as well. Resistance bands are another inexpensive option. Your own body weight counts, too. Try push-ups, abdominal crunches and leg squats.

3. Stretching

Most aerobic and strength training activities cause your muscles to contract and flex. For balance in your fitness training program, it's important to stretch those muscles, too. Stretching improves the range of motion of your joints and promotes better posture. Regular stretching can even help relieve stress.

Before you stretch, warm up by walking or doing a favorite exercise at low intensity for five to 10 minutes. Better yet, stretch after you exercise — when your muscles are warm and receptive to stretching. Ideally, you'll stretch whenever you exercise. If you don't exercise regularly, you might want to stretch at least three times a week after warming up to maintain flexibility. Activities such as yoga promote flexibility, too.

4. Core stability

The muscles in your abdomen, lower back and pelvis — known as your core muscles — help protect your back and connect upper and lower body movements. Core strength is a key element of a well-rounded fitness training program.

Core exercises help train your muscles to brace the spine and enable you to use your upper and lower body muscles more effectively. So what counts as a core exercise? Any exercise that uses the trunk of your body without support, including abdominal crunches. You can also try various core exercises with a fitness ball.

5. Balance training

You can be strong, flexible and aerobically fit, yet still have poor balance. Training can help you maintain and improve balance. This is important since balance tends to deteriorate with age, which can lead to falls and fractures. Try standing on one leg for increasing periods of time to improve your overall stability. Activities such as tai chi can promote balance, too.

Cover all five elements

Whether you create your own fitness training program or enlist the help of a personal trainer, make aerobic fitness, muscular fitness, stretching, core exercise and balance training part of your overall exercise plan. It isn't necessary to fit each of the five elements into every fitness session, but factoring them into your regular routine can help you promote fitness for life.