

Cobba's First Law of Exercising: 'Do No Harm'

Almost everyone will agree with me that physical activity (which includes exercising) is beneficial to us. The downside of this 'wonder pill' is that many of us harm ourselves, either because we are overzealous, or because we get the wrong advice.

Some of the commonly encountered exercise challenges are:

- Increasing the intensity and/or duration of our exercise programme faster than our fitness level can cope with;
- Selecting exercise programmes without considering medical conditions that we may have (for example, an asthmatic exercising vigorously in a closed environment with many sweaty people);
- Performing exercises that are contraindicated for us (that one should avoid), such as head circles or head-rolling exercises.

In the future, we will discuss some contraindicated exercises that still find their way into many exercise programmes. Many of these contraindicated exercises may not harm you instantly, but they will have a cumulative effect. If you persist in performing them, you will eventually pay a price for this. Even the right exercise done in the wrong way over a long period may be harmful.

Dear reader, before you perform any exercise, ALWAYS ASK YOURSELF these questions:

1. What benefit do I get from this exercise?

If you cannot find any benefit, the exercise may not be worth your while.

2. Are there any risks to this exercise?

Risks may not always be obvious. Whenever in doubt, seek professional help.

3. How do I feel during and after this exercise?

If you feel dizzy or nauseous; or if you experience headaches or have any form of moderate to severe pain during or after an exercise, STOP and seek help. ALWAYS LISTEN TO YOUR BODY!!!

4. Can I shorten my workout time by combining certain exercises?

Many of us can barely spare fifteen minutes a day for exercising. It may be worthwhile adopting exercises that work out several muscle groups at a time.

5. Can I receive the same benefits doing a safer exercise?

A number of us fantasize over a six-pack (great looking abdominal muscles), but very few ever get there (read 'The Truth will set your Abdominal Fat Free'). You often find the likes of elderly people, people with uncontrolled high blood pressure, etc., performing ridiculous exercises to firm their abdominal muscles. Find out what is appropriate for you.

The bottom-line is to maintain or improve yourself with exercising. Don't get over-ambitious and worsen your current state.

Yes! A lack of adequate physical activity will make you worse off over time, but you will be rewarded when you do the RIGHT exercises the RIGHT way.

The next time you exercise, STOP! THINK! MAKE SURE IT'S SAFE.

Dr. Kojo Cobba Essel

Moms' Health Club

www.healthclubsg.com

Reference:

- Fitness Therapy by Dr. Karl Knopf, EdD