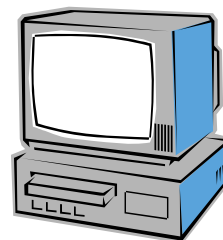


Physical Activity at Home: Choosing the Right Video

Do you find it difficult to fit physical activity into your busy schedule? Does where you live or your income prevent you from joining a fitness or recreation center? At-home exercise might be just the thing for you. Physical fitness and a healthy lifestyle can be achieved right in your own living room.

Maybe you just have short blocks of time throughout the day to do physical activity, or maybe your schedule requires that you do it in the early morning or late evening. Even if you have access to a fitness center, maybe you prefer to do physical activity in private. An exercise video could be the answer. All you need is a television, a VCR or DVD player, and a good pair of tennis shoes.

Exercise videos are a lot less expensive than a bulky piece of exercise equipment such as a treadmill or weight bench. You might be able to check videos out from a local library or movie rental store if you don't wish to buy them. If you plan to do your physical activity at home and would like to gather a collection of videos be sure to include a variety. Choose videos that provide cardiovascular exercise such as hi/lo aerobics, dancing, step aerobics, or kickboxing. For strength training, choose videos on muscle conditioning or Pilates training. If you choose videos that target a specific body part like your legs or shoulders, pay special attention to the other areas of your body as well. You will want to avoid overtraining one body part. The key is to have a well-balanced workout, with an entire body that is physically fit, not just legs or shoulders. For flexibility, choose a yoga or relaxation video. Alternate the videos you use during a week's time. Be sure you get some activity in all the areas of fitness – cardiovascular, strength, and flexibility. Keep in mind that some videos include all of these things in one session. If you don't want to invest in several videos, choose one that has a little of everything in it.



Things to Consider

Space – Think about the space you will have to do the activity. You might need to move furniture to provide a place for activity. If you are very limited on space, you might choose something like a walk aerobics video instead of a kickboxing video.

Equipment – Check out the back cover of the videos to see if equipment is needed. If you don't wish to purchase additional equipment, choose videos that don't have special requirements. However, don't avoid a video because equipment such as bands or weights are needed. Sometimes the activities can be done without them, or you can make your own at home with canned goods or jugs filled with sand.

Fitness Level – If you are new to exercise, choose videos that have beginner or basic in the title. It is important to start slowly and progress gradually. If you are experienced, choose intermediate or advanced videos to ensure that you get a workout that is intense enough for your fitness level.

Instructor – It is important that the instructor is experienced and has a degree or certification in the fitness field. Most video covers will tell you this information. Try to avoid videos that make claims or guarantees that are unrealistic, such as “Lose 10 pounds or five inches in a week.” Also, be cautious of videos that promote movie or music stars who don’t have a fitness background. Avoid these videos completely if there is no evidence that they were created with the help of a certified fitness professional.

Check the Date – With research, exercise recommendations have changed over time. New findings help us to know what is safe and what type of activity is more effective for healthy results. There are some classic videos out there that are great, but to be on the safe side choose the most current videos that have been released within the past five years.

Finding a Good Video

The following information lists some examples of videos and instructors you might choose to try. These videos are from qualified, respected professionals within the fitness field. There are many good videos out there and the ones listed here may not meet your needs. However, it is a place to start. Everyone has their own style. You might have to try a few different videos before you find the method of instruction and type of music that you enjoy.

- **Leslie Sansone – Walk Away the Pounds series**
- **Denise Austin – All varieties: Xtralite Beginners, hi/lo aerobics, spot training, yoga, and Pilates**
- **Moira Stott – Stott Pilates**
- **Rodney Yee – Yoga for Back Care, Yoga AM, Yoga PM**
- **Patricia Walden – Yoga for Beginners**



Sources:

- Video examples were gathered from qualified fitness professionals in Kentucky.
- American Council on Exercise, Fit Facts, **How to Choose an Exercise Video** available online at http://www.acefitness.org/fitfacts/fitfacts_display.aspx?itemid=125.

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