Exercises is the key to lifelong well-being. People tend to think of an "elixir of life" as medicine in a bottle, a "magic bullet" as some kind of a pill, and the "fountain of youth" as mystical waters. But exercise may come closer than anything else we know as the best way to become and stay beautiful, strong, healthy, energetic, and happy. It may be the single best route to a long and active life.

**Exercise**

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**What Is The Magic Bullet?**

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**Benefits Of Exercise**

1. **YOUTHFUL APPEARANCE:** Exercise helps keep your body trim, your muscles toned, your posture straight and tall, your complexion clear and glowing.
2. **STRENGTH:** Exercise helps build strong muscles and bones and maintains healthy joints.
3. **ENERGY, STAMINA:** A regular exercise program, rather than exhausting you, gives you more energy and staying-power—not only physically, but also mentally and emotionally.
4. **MOBILITY:** Exercise helps keep you moving. The ability to move about is critical for living independently and remaining able to do what you want, when you want.
5. **SAFETY:** Exercise keeps your reflexes alert and your muscles ready to respond so you might avoid and recover quickly from accidents, falls, injuries, and illnesses.
6. **DISEASE TREATMENT AND PREVENTION:** Exercise can help prevent or treat many diseases such as stroke, heart disease, diabetes, cancer, arthritis, and osteoporosis. Check with your doctor to make sure your exercise program is right for you.
7. **WEIGHT CONTROL:** Exercise not only burns calories, it also tunes up your metabolism to better use nutrients. Studies show that in the long run exercise may be even more effective than diet in weight loss. In addition, exercise helps you look better, regardless of how much you weigh.
8. **ATTITUDE:** Regular exercise goes a long way toward imparting a strong sense of well-being, a positive outlook and a feeling of “can-do” confidence.
9. **EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE, PSYCHOLOGICAL BALANCE:** Exercise is a great way to cool off and get a grip when you’re stressed out. Ever feel so frustrated or angry you just want to punch the wall or run the other way? Channel that impulse into exercise. Exercise is a great way to cool off and get a grip when you’re stressed out. Ever feel so frustrated or angry you just want to punch the wall or run the other way? Channel that impulse into exercise.
10. **MENTAL ALERTNESS:** As is evident in any heated basketball game, tennis match or dance performance, exercise tunes up your reflexes, reaction time, and ability to process information. Exercise helps you wake up in the morning and stay awake until bedtime.
11. **FLEXIBILITY:** Physical activity enhances your ability to bend and stretch and avoid strains and stiffness.

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For More Information

American Council on Exercise
www.acefitness.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov

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The Wellness Council of America is an independent company dedicated to helping organizations, including Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska, build and sustain results-oriented wellness programs. The information contained in this brochure has been carefully reviewed for accuracy. It is not intended to replace the advice of your physician or health care provider.
The Exercise Checklist
Your Exercise Routine...
Items To Consider When Preparing
No one can exercise for you—you have to do it for yourself. And exercise doesn't have to be strenuous or exhausting to be beneficial.

- It's best to start exercising modestly and gradually increase the duration and intensity based on your fitness level.
- In fact, like most anything else, too much exercise can be counterproductive. "No pain, no gain," Exercise is about joy, satisfaction, accomplishment, and feeling good.

How Much Exercise Is Right For Me?
Any amount of regular exercise is better than none. And exercise doesn't have to be strenuous or exhausting to be beneficial.

-1 It's best to start exercising modestly and gradually increase the duration and intensity based on your fitness level.
- In fact, like most anything else, too much exercise can be counterproductive. "No pain, no gain," Exercise is about joy, satisfaction, accomplishment, and feeling good.

Take The Hurdles In Stride
No one can exercise for you—you have to do it for yourself. Even if you hire a personal trainer to show you what to do and to help you do it, you're the one who has to expend the effort if you hope to collect the rewards.

Items To Consider When Preparing Your Exercise Routine...
The Exercise Checklist
- Convenience: Make sure you can get to your workouts on your daily calendar and stick to those 'appointments.'
- Affordable: What's your budget? Exercise can range from free and inexpensive to extremely costly investments in equipment, fees, travel, and preparation.
- Practical: How well will the activities you're considering fit into your schedule and lifestyle? Consider whether your sport involves special clothing or equipment, and can comfortably accommodate those needs.
- Time Commitment: Some people only have time for two 15-minute workouts a day. Others welcome all-day events or even week-long adventures. Make sure you have enough time to participate in the activities you enjoy.
- Consistency: Be sure your program includes some form of exercise several times a week or shorter bouts several times a day.
- Year-Round: Aim for exercise or a complementary group of exercises that enables you to remain active in every season.

Exercise Options
Consider the following possibilities as your main or supplemental exercise choices:
- Walking Or Running: Can be done anywhere, year-round, indoors or out; safe and beneficial for virtually all ages and physical conditions.
- Swimming And Water Exercise: Great total body aerobic and muscle workout; can be year-round indoors; especially good for people with arthritis and joint or mobility problems, pregnant women—and an important safety skill for all ages.
- Exercise Classes: Year-round, indoor, instructors on-hand; something for all ranges of abilities, fitness, interests, goals; variety ranges from step classes, stretching, yoga, and relaxation.
- Dancing: Gets you moving while having fun and socializing; ranges from folk, square, and balloon dancing classes to jazz, tap, funk, and ballet. You can also try "cutting a rug" in the privacy of your home.
- Weight Training: Ranges from strengthening and conditioning to body building; year-round, indoors, studies show benefits for bone health and strength.
- Exercise Videos Or Apps: The options are practically endless. Search for programs or apps that you can download to your mobile phone or ask some friends for their recommendations. There are several programs, videos, and apps readily available!
- Rethink Everyday Routines: Try walking instead of driving, or parking at a distance and walking the rest of the way; take the stairs instead of the elevator; do household chores and yard work; stroll down the hall to visit colleagues instead of phoning or e-mailing. As long as you're moving, it counts as exercise.