Focus on Fitness

Do I need different pairs of shoes to play tennis, run, and do aerobics?

While it will do some damage to your bank account, you need a sport-specific pair of shoes for any activity you do more than three times a week. Otherwise you risk injury and may hamper your performance. A running shoe, for example, provides extra cushioning and has a more durable outsole (the bottom of a shoe) than an aerobics shoe, which supports your ankle when you make sudden side-to-side movements.

Set exercise goals. Here are suggestions for what to do.

When you set goals for your exercise program, they can help you stay on track. But it’s important to set goals that are realistic.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggests how to set exercise targets:

- Talk to your doctor about exercise, and set up time on your calendar to work out.
- Establish long-term goals, including incremental increases to your exercise plan.
- Make your goals specific and measurable so you can gauge whether or not you’re meeting them.
- Make your goals attainable and realistic.
- Make your goals relevant to living a healthier, longer life.
- Set realistic time limits for achieving your goals.

Health Tip: Fitness Fashion: Finding the Right Athletic Shoe

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Health Tip:

Don’t think of exercise as a chore. Engage in activities that you enjoy.

(HealthDay News) – If you think of exercise as a chore that you have to do, it can be more difficult to stick with it.

The Weight-Control Information Network offers these suggestions for making exercise fun:

• Figure out which fitness activities you enjoy most, and incorporate them into your exercise routine. Try to vary the routine so you don’t become bored.
• Walk with a friend or family member, or sign up together for an exercise class.
• Build a community or backyard garden, and work in it regularly.
• Exercise in short spurts, such as three 10-minute walks.
• If you are concerned about exercising outdoors for safety reasons, join a local gym.

Kick off your exercise program. Start with doctor’s approval and a plan.

(HealthDay News) – So you want to get healthier and start exercising? Experts say you shouldn’t just wing it. Get medical OK from your doctor, and devise a fitness plan for a healthier you.

The American Council on Exercise recommends:

• Talk to your doctor about whether it’s safe for you to exercise.
• Create a plan that includes activity that you enjoy. This means you’re more likely to stick with it.
• Start out with short bursts of low-intensity exercise. Over time, make exercises longer and more vigorous. Track your progress over time.
• Perform strengthening and resistance-training exercises to build muscle and boost metabolism.
• Schedule workouts at the beginning of each week to accommodate your other plans.
• Teach yourself not to think of exercise as “all or nothing.” Any activity, even if you don’t meet your goals, is better than being inactive.
How can I be sure the shoe fits?

“Shoes shouldn’t need to be broken in to feel comfortable,” says Tom Brunick, director of The Athlete’s Foot Stores R & D Center in Naperville, Illinois. “If a shoe is uncomfortable in the store, that discomfort will be compounded at the gym or on the road.” Here are some tips for finding a good fit:

• There should be a half-inch between the tip of your longest toe and the end of the shoe.
• Try on both shoes; one foot is usually bigger than the other.
• Make sure the ball of your foot fits easily in the widest part of the shoe. Likewise, your heel shouldn’t slip around in the back of the shoe.
• Shop in the late afternoon when your feet are slightly swollen, especially if you typically exercise after work.
• Try to wear the same type of socks you normally wear when you exercise.
• Women with wide or large feet may have better luck with men’s shoes, which are generally cut wider.

How often should I replace my shoes?

If you exercise three to five times a week, probably every three to six months is a good guide. Better yet, examine your shoes closely once a month and look for signs of excessive wear, such as missing tread, flattened midsoles, and torn stitching where the uppers meet the sole. Pay attention to what your feet are telling you, as well. When your dogs are barking incessantly, it’s time for new shoes.

Healthy Tip:

Vary your exercise routine – It will be more fun and make for a better workout

Varying your exercise routine can be just what you need to get out of your workout rut.

The American Council on Exercise suggests how to vary your strength-training program:

• Change the number of reps you do in each set, or the number of sets per exercise.
• Vary the amount of resistance.
• Vary rest sessions between workouts, reps or sets.
• Vary the type or order of exercises.
• Adjust how fast you exercise.

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Ingredients

- ¾ cup water
- ½ tsp. curry powder
- ¾ cup couscous
- 1 cup cubed, cooked chicken breast (about ½ lb. boneless, skinless)
- 1 ½ cups cooked (1/2 cup dry) or 1 15-oz. can garbanzo beans (or chickpeas), drained
- ½ cup red cabbage, chopped
- ¼ cup celery, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup plus 2 tbsp. fresh orange juice
- 1 tsp. orange rind, grated
- 2 tsp. olive oil
- ¼ tsp. pepper

Instructions

1. In a medium saucepan, bring water, salt, and curry powder to a boil; stir in couscous.
2. Remove from heat; let stand, covered, 5 minutes. Fluff with a fork.
3. Add chicken, garbanzos, cabbage, onions, and celery.
4. Combine orange rind, orange juice, olive oil, and pepper in a small bowl; stir with a wire whisk until blended.
5. Add to couscous mixture; toss well.
6. Serve immediately or chill.

References