

DR. KEOUGH'S GUIDE TO
FITNESS



DR. FELICITY KEOUGH-BLIGH

Dr. Keough's Guide to Fitness
Dr. Felicity Keoug
I Fly Publishing

Published by I Fly Publishing
Copyright 2019 Dr. Felicity Keough
All rights reserved.

Copyright: Thank you for respecting the hard work and effort that went into this project by protecting the author's rights in accordance with the United States Copyright Act of 1976. No part of this document may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior written permission of Felicity Keough. If you wish to use content from this book, please obtain written permission by contacting the author at dr.keough@keoughchiropractic.com.

Disclaimer: The information contained in this book and services provided by Dr. Felicity Keough are meant for informational and educational purposes only and are not intended to be a substitute for the medical advice of physicians. The reader should regularly consult a physician in matters relating to his/her health and particularly with respect to any symptoms that may require diagnosis or medical attention.

Contact: For additional information on chiropractic services, nutritional counseling or functional medicine or to discuss booking Dr. Felicity Keough for speaking engagements for your group or organization feel free to email info@keoughchiropractic.com or visit her website at www.keoughchiropractic.com for more information.

Dr. Felicity Keough
Dr. Keough's Guide to Restorative Eating for the Whole Family

BISAC Subject headings:

1. HEA017000 HEALTH & FITNESS / Diet & Nutrition / Nutrition 2. CKB039000 COOKING / Health & Healing / General 3. OCC011000 BODY, MIND & SPIRIT / Healing / General

Committing to Your Fitness

There's no better time than the present moment to commit to your health. It is one of the greatest gifts you can give yourself! One of the best ways to do this is through exercise. It takes time and dedication, but the results are always worth it. Exercise has proven benefits that can impact anyone at any stage of life in a positive way.

Just a few of the health benefits of exercise include:

- Improved Mood
- Weight Loss
- Prevent Osteoporosis
- More Energy
- Better Sleep
- Reduce the risk of disease
- Decrease stress
- Improved memory

When it comes to chronic disease, exercise is also a win-win. Working out is known for improving insulin sensitivity while decreasing blood pressure and blood fat levels.¹ Lack of exercise creates excess belly fat and is attributed to heart disease, obesity, type 2 diabetes, as well as early death. Therefore, daily exercise is recommended to combat belly fat, maintain healthy body weight, and decrease the risk of these diseases for a healthy immune system.

The heart also needs to be exercised like a muscle to function properly. When the heart works effectively, it can pull more oxygen out of the blood to decrease pumping more blood to surrounding muscles and working harder. This helps reduce the chance of stress hormones putting more pressure on the heart as well, working as a beta-blocker to lower blood pressure and slow the heart rate. Aerobic exercise, also known as cardiovascular exercise, is the best kind of exercise for your heart.

Exercise is known to improve brain health by increasing the blood flow from the heart to the brain through cardiovascular

stimulation. The faster and harder your heart beats when you exercise, the more oxygen will also be pumped to the brain. This means elevating your heart rate has a positive impact on your brain performance and can help your memory as you get older.²

Being physically active can also help improve digestion, which is something many people struggle with. During exercise, more blood is being produced throughout the body and flows toward the digestive system. This can help to relieve symptoms of gas, bloating, heartburn, cramps, and constipation.³ In general, your organs are more efficient when you're in shape!

Finally, exercise makes you feel good! A variety of hormones are secreted when you work out. These are known as endorphins. Your brain secretes more dopamine and serotonin, which are known as the happiness chemicals. Additionally, over time, exercise also helps to decrease your cortisol levels, which is the stress hormone. Cortisol is often released in "fight or flight" mode, so the body feels stressed which later causes disease. However, too much exercise can also be counterintuitive.

Breathing

How often do you think about your breath? If you're like anyone else, probably not that much!

Breathing is a vital process of the body that is directly linked to the overall performance of our body and brain. We breathe 15x/minute or 21,000 times per day!⁴ This means when we exercise, breathing is important!

The process of respiration, also known as breathing, burns glucose and oxygen in the body so that muscular contractions, mental processes, and glandular secretions occur. If you want your body to be in peak performance for exercise, it's time to take note of how you breathe, not only regularly, but also when working out.

Many people breathe incorrectly, which results in shallow breathing. This means they're not using their full lung capacity and the body is deprived of essential oxygen that it needs to function optimally. When you use your full lung capacity, you use your diaphragm to breathe. Your diaphragm is your breathing muscle centered between your chest and your abdomen. When you inhale, it contracts to bring air in and when you exhale it relaxes to release air out.

Slow, deep breaths are associated with calm and content states of mind. Irregular and fast-paced breathing indicates anxiety or panic. The way this works is through the nervous system. Our breath is an amazing tool we can use because we can control it, unlike other automatic processes such as the heartbeat or digestion. Many animals that breathe slower also live longer, like elephants and turtles. Animals that have shallow, quick breaths live shorter lives, like dogs.

The breath can be very helpful when performing difficult movements, such as pullups or lifting heavy weights like bench pressing. In this case, it is best to use the exhale on exertion, as it is the more powerful part of the breath. For example, when you perform a pullup, you will exhale on the way up and inhale as you lower down.

Foundation of Core Movement

When most people think of the core, the first thing that comes to mind is the abdominals. Everyone wants defined abs, but beyond that strong abdominals can prevent injury and overall assist movement.

However, the core is comprised of 3 areas, not just the award-winning ab area. In addition to the abdominals, the core is also made up of the hips and lower back, which are all linked together. These three areas work in sync to stabilize the center of the body.

Most core movement relies on the principle of the midline. The midline is not only the physical spine but also an imaginary line through the center of the body. The theory goes that most movement is more efficient when you pull it into toward the center or the midline. So, to find stronger movement, one must streamline their effort by contracting the muscles into the midline to go further, faster, push higher or harder, etc. This like a rebound effect. Think of a coil- it contracts backward only to propel itself further forward.

A general rule of thumb to activate the core or engage the abdominals is to brace the core by pulling the abdomen in. You can think of the abdomen as an abdominal scoop that lifts inward toward the spine. This helps to not only protect all of the organs in the area but also promote blood flow and protect the back muscles and skeletal structure of the hips and spine.

The abdominal scooping action helps to activate the deep core muscles, which goes beyond the superficial six-pack. These deep core muscles stabilize the trunk of the body.

Many people often complain they have thrown their back out when picking up a heavy object off the floor. This is a combination of poor lifting posture and weak abdominal muscles. Have strong deep core muscles are so important because they help prevent this common lifting injury by bracing the spine in combination with proper technique of bending the knees to lift something heavy.

Low Impact Exercise

Some people dread exercise because of the thought of getting sore or causing injury. If you're recovering from an injury or have a health condition that prevents you from an intense workout, low-impact exercise is the solution. It's also a great way to ease back into an exercise routine if you have been out of one for a little while.

Low impact exercise still elevates the heart rate, burns fat, and tones muscles without putting as much stress on the body as say running, skiing, or gymnastics. These types of exercise put you more at risk for injury. Walking, cycling and yoga are all great recommendations for low-impact exercise.

Walking

If you have two feet, use them! Walking is a free and easy exercise you can do any time, anywhere. Go for a walk outside in your neighborhood, through a local park, or even in a big shopping mall if it's too hot or cold outside. Get some good walking shoes for support and hit the pavement!

Yoga

The physical health benefits of yoga are undeniable and practiced by millions worldwide. There are many different styles that cater to various needs. Vinyasa, Ashtanga, or power yoga are great workouts as they are more intense with constant flowing movement. Hatha yoga is also strengthening, however, the postures are held for longer periods, so it's great to develop balance and stability. Other types of yoga such as yin or restorative yoga are also great because they emphasize long holds in reclined or seated postures that allow for a deep stretch. Stretching is an important part of fitness that many forget!

If you work your muscles regularly into a contracted state through intense physical exercise, they also need to release to prevent soreness and improve range of motion in the joints. All styles of yoga can help with this, not to mention the added benefit it has on the state of mind, too.

Yoga is also not just stretching- it utilizes the breath to create a bridge between the body and the mind to allow for a deeper experience that is often very healing for many people. It is loved by many as a form of exercise that can prevent injuries when done correctly in proper alignment and also can help some recover from injuries, too.

Cycling

Cycling is yet another great low impact form of exercise. This can also be done outdoors or indoors on a stationary bike.

Cycling is a great alternative to running as it does not stress the knees or ankles as running can, nor does it tighten the hamstrings or lower back the way running does. It still moves the body at a regular interval to get the heart rate up to burn fat and keep the heart-healthy. It is a great exercise regimen for people who may have trouble with their knees or tight hamstrings.

Resistance Training

Resistance training is a way to build your endurance and overall muscular strength. Types of equipment include weights, dumbbells, exercise bands, bars, and even gravity. You may also use medicine balls, kettlebells, or weight machines at the gym.

Generally, resistance training is thought to be a safe alternative to weight training as it is gentler on the joints. Resistance training will burn fat and tone muscle while weight training can put you at risk for injury due to the greater range of motion required.

As a form of strength training, resistance training should be performed 2-3 times per week to see results. It can also be done every day. There are over 600 muscles in the human body, so you can spread the target areas out over the week or a few days. Different workouts and equipment will target different muscle groups. You can alternate muscle groups daily for the whole body to get toned effectively. For example, in a 3-day workout plan, you can plan to do legs on Day 1, upper body on Day 2, and then the whole body on Day 3.

Examples of resistance training exercises include barbell squats, biceps curls, pull-ups, and rowing to give you an idea. TRX, using suspension straps, is another great form of resistance exercise that uses gravity and your body weight to achieve a workout.

Flexibility

The age-old saying goes “you are only as young as your spine is flexible”. While you don’t need to be a contortionist to be flexible, there are many health benefits that flexibility offers such as:

- Improved posture
- Recovery from injury
- Decreased physical pain and muscular soreness
- Better balance and coordination
- More strength
- A positive outlook on life

Flexibility is gained by stretching. When you stretch, you bring more blood flow and oxygen into the muscles. If there is any damage or injuries, this will help nourish and repair the muscular fibers. Stretching can improve your overall physical performance ability by allowing your muscles to work more effectively and in a greater range of motion. If the muscles are tight and contracted and stress is placed on them, the risk of injury is higher. Stretching is an essential part of any exercise regimen!

In athletic performance, flexibility is also vital when it comes to speed. For example, a runner who does not incorporate a stretching routine will have less strength and power in their muscles to fire quickly so the chance of injury grows.

For most, flexibility is merely just a physical practice of moving the joints and muscles through their full range of motion. However, flexibility can also be a state of mind. As stretching releases tension from the body, you can also think of it as relieving tension in the mind. Therefore, stretching can bring peace of mind and help us deal with difficult situations with more ease.

Posture

Believe it or not, your posture also plays a role in your overall health. Many daily aches and pains, such as lower back pain, are often attributed to poor posture. Your posture is essentially the position you hold your body in while sitting or standing.

What we call good posture is when the bones and joints are in alignment to support the proper functioning of the muscles. This means that when you have good posture, the muscles can work more efficiently, use less energy, and become less fatigued.

It is important to develop an awareness of your posture to correct anything that may be causing harm. For example, a common posture imbalance is called lumbar lordosis. This condition is pelvis that is tilted forward and places abnormal stress and pressure on the discs and the joints of the lower back. Different healing modalities such as chiropractic and massage therapy offer incredible benefits for postural awareness.

Some may think that if there is a pain in the body, not to exercise. But the truth is, exercise often helps to treat and prevent not only injuries but also postural distortions. Through core conditioning and spinal exercises, spinal conditions can often be treated and corrected to alleviate painful symptoms.⁵

The same can be said for another common misalignment: slouching or computer/cell phone posture which causes the shoulders to slump forward. You can bring awareness to this by correcting your posture when you sit as a static postural exercise. Dynamic posture is how you hold your body when you exercise. Through specific exercises and stretches, the muscles in the area can be released so that your old posture is replaced by a new posture that healthily supports your body.

Healthy posture not only makes us feel better but also can display several benefits such as more confidence, increased lung capacity, and a stronger spine.

It is vital to connect your breath to not only your posture but also to every movement you make. Our breath is like the language to which we can communicate with our bodies. Remember this whenever you exercise and notice the difference in your workout, posture, and mindset.

Endnotes

- 1 Colburg, Sheri R. “How to Increase Insulin Sensitivity.” December 2008. (Accessed September 2019) <https://www.diabetesselfmanagement.com/managing-diabetes/treatment-approaches/increasing-insulin-sensitivity/>
- 2 Godman, Heidi. “Regular exercise changes the brain to improve memory, thinking skills.” April 2014. (Accessed September 2019) <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/regular-exercise-changes-brain-improve-memory-thinking-skills-201404097110>
- 3 <https://www.manhattangastroenterology.com/exercise-affects-digestion/> (Accessed September 2019)
- 4 <https://www.wonderopolis.org/wonder/how-many-breaths-do-you-take-each-day> (Accessed September 2019)

DR. KEOUGH'S GUIDE TO FITNESS

PART OF THE HEALTHY LIVING SERIES:

GUIDE TO RESTORATIVE EATING FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

GUIDE TO USING BREATH TO STAY HEALTHY

GUIDE TO GET AND STAY HEALTHY NOW



2440 Executive Dr., Suite 100, St Charles, MO 63303

info@keoughchiropractic.com

636-244-4994