

Part 3, Chapter 26: The Importance of Exercise

I've touched on exercise. For many years, and in particular when I was in high school, exercise was not my idea of fun. In fact, I hated any kind of sports activities. Still, the state insisted that we had to get a physical education. I was one of those guys that always got picked last when teams were selected. When they made us do these forced runs I would invariably miss my next class as I barely managed to walk back to the locker room. Such was my opinion of 'physical fitness'.



It took many years to realize that there's a lot more to physical fitness than being good at sports. Even when I went to college and had to take one physical education class I did a really tough one: Billiards. (It was less strenuous than ping pong, though there is nothing easy about it. I have a lot of respect for people that are really good at this 'sport'.)

As I've gotten older I've come to appreciate physical fitness. Exercise does a lot more than embarrassing you in gym class. It's actually vital to life functions. To be sure, since I've been exercising at the fitness center on an alternate day basis, I've had a lot more energy, I'm more mentally tranquil (and that has as much to do with diet as it does with exercise), I have a lot more flexibility, and—a big one—I've stopped having periodic and chronic back pain caused, I've come to discover, mostly by weak muscles. Too, my posture has improved and, in general, I'm more optimistic than ever. Plus, my muscles are getting stronger, not weaker, which so often happens as people age chronologically. Best of all, of the exercise I do now I have no one I'm competing against except myself.

You have roughly 640 muscles and all these muscles must be used! If you do not use them, you lose them! If they are not used, they then start to lose their tone, strength and flexibility! Exercise needs not be violent and there are hundreds of ways to exercise the human body. The best and greatest of all exercise is brisk walking ... You can walk vigorously, swinging your arms, for a good workout or just take a stroll. When you walk and breathe in deeply as you stride along you are building vital force and stimulating the eliminating and cleansing processes ...^{1}

Exercise is important. Of course, this really isn't a book on exercise except as it pertains to over all fitness. Suffice it to say, it's a really good idea. The CDC, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, published an article relevant to this discussion that brings home the point. The article can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/pa-health/index.htm>.

Regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health. It can help:

- Control your weight

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- Reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease [though diet has far more to do with this]
- Reduce your risk for type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome
- Reduce your risk of some cancers
- Strengthen your bones and muscles [which is my point]
- Improve your mental health and mood [which is equally important]
- Improve your ability to do daily activities and prevent falls, if you're an older adult
- Increase your chances of living longer^{2}

Anyway you get it done, exercise is of critically importance if you intend to reach a state optimum health.