

Consulting with your physician is key

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As consumers of fitness information, materials and equipment, we are warned to consult with our physician before beginning an exercise program. This is especially important when the activity involves intensity that will cause an increase in heart rate and breathing and places additional stress on joints and muscles.

The American Council on Exercise recommends consulting with your physician before beginning an exercise program for:

- Men over age 45 and women over age 55 who have not been regular exercisers
- A family history of premature death before the age of 50 or history of heart disease, murmur, irregular heart rhythm or heart attack
- High blood pressure or no knowledge of what blood pressure should be
- A history of neck, chest, shoulder or arm pressure or pain
- Individuals with diabetes
- Those who are post surgery and/or going through physical rehabilitation
- Individuals who exhibit a shortness of breath after mild exertion
- Undiagnosed joint, bone, buttock, back or muscle pain and/or cramping
- A recent unexplained weight change
- Sores on the feet that will not heal
- Dizziness, fainting, loss of balance or falling
- Abnormal bone density
- Pregnancy
- Taking a daily medication
- Any other medical condition or concern

Once a medical condition is diagnosed appropriately and stable, participation in fitness classes or instruction with a qualified medical provider may be appropriate. Programs like cardiac rehab and physical therapy can provide customized fitness programs that address specific medical concerns.

If you have an ongoing relationship with your healthcare provider, a simple phone call to your physician's office may be all that is necessary to gain the go ahead. Be sure to inform your healthcare provider of the type of exercise you plan to perform. So don't wait, and make the call today to begin your fitness journey.