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Let's Talk Dirty

By Joan Maiden

When I was growing up, there were some certain words that just weren't used in polite company—they were considered "dirty". Many of those words are no longer taboo, but there seems to be one "dirty" word people shy away from—the "E" word—exercise.

The big selling point for many diets is "no exercise necessary" like exercise should be avoided at all cost. The dictionary defines exercise as "physical activity that is done in order to become stronger and healthier." Why has being

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physically active and becoming healthy and strong gotten such a bad rap? The benefits of exercise, according to Mayo Clinic, are:

- Weight control
- Controlling diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, certain cancers, arthritis, and depression.
- Improved mood
- More energy
- Better sleep
- More spark in your sex life
- Fun, social activity

When I was a kid, we had three TV channels and had to get up and walk across the room to change the channel. Since 1950, the obesity rate has increased from under 10% to over 30%. Fast food and processed foods have been blamed in part for this increase, but the decrease in activity levels is also a major culprit. We are eating more calories and burning less. We are spending more time sitting—in front of the TV, computer, iPad and video games.



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The recommended activity level is 10,000 steps per day or about five miles of walking. When pedometers were worn by a group of Amish adults, Amish men walked an average of over 18,000 steps per day and Amish woman over 14,000 steps per day simply going about their daily chores. The Amish lifestyle is similar to how our grandparents

and great-grandparents lived. On average, now days men only walk 5300 steps and women 4900 steps per day, far below the average recommended for good health and far less than adults in other countries.

I, for one, have no desire to go back to the lifestyle of 150 years ago, but we do need to make an effort to become more active. Wearing a pedometer can be a fun, informative method of seeing just how active you are and how many steps you take. Exercise really isn't a dirty word—so get moving.

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