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A close-up portrait of Betty Ford, an elderly woman with short, styled brown hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a light blue jacket and large pearl earrings. The background is a plain, light color.

Betty Ford

Exclusive Interview

Founder of the Betty Ford Center

“Exercise and Recovery” From *RECOVER* Magazine by Jeffrey Rose, Clinical Hypnotist and Nutritionist

The importance that exercise plays in the health of the individual is now universally recognized. Everyone should be incorporating exercise into their life as a regular part of their life routine. As true as this is, there are special reasons why regular exercise helps those in recovery lead a healthier life. Exercise improves a person’s outlook on life and raises their sense of well being. This eliminates any desire to reach for a drug to artificially improve how you feel in life. Many people have used drugs in the past to compensate for negative feelings. However, if you greatly alleviate or even totally eliminate these negative feelings, your need to compensate for them with drugs will no longer exist. This is exactly what happens to most people when they embark on and carry through with a program of regular exercise.

When you hear the word “exercise” do you think of it as something that is pleasant or unpleasant, as fun or work? How you feel about exercise plays a role in how often you will do it? Have fun when you exercise because if you are having fun when you exercise, you will automatically find it more pleasant. Focus on how good it feels to move your body. Remember also, if life makes you stressed and tense, exercise automatically releases stress and tension and gives you more energy. You can’t help feeling better about life and yourself too. So think of exercise as a wonderful way to make yourself feel better in just a short amount of time.

You might have heard that if a person smiles when they’re unhappy, they tend to feel better, and the same goes for exercise, if you’re feeling stressed and down, exercising will pick you up and make you feel better and more resourceful. And by releasing stress, you will no longer be drained of energy from stressors and tension creating situations that occur in your daily life. What did you do in the past when you had a stressful day? Did you hurt yourself by doing unhealthy things like overeat, drink, smoke or worse? Now you will be making a conscious choice to do what makes you healthier, while achieving the exact same goals of relieving your daily stress and making yourself better, with fun exercise. You’ll have made a new commitment to yourself to treat yourself better by respecting your physical being and becoming healthier and healthier.

Later on in this article I will discuss an often neglected aspect of the health promoting qualities of exercising, but first I want to discuss what types of exercises are best for you. The most valuable exercise and the most valuable piece of equipment for doing this exercise is obvious, but usually not known by most personal trainers, who often seem to have a particular favorite regardless of the individual they are advising. It is, to put it succinctly, any exercise that you will enjoy doing regularly. People often ask fitness advisers what piece of equipment they should buy to work out on. Well, the correct answer is the one you will enjoy using and thus will use consistently and regularly. For example one person might enjoy a rowing machine in their home, while another might enjoy a treadmill. While, again, another might enjoy using a climber or stair-like workout piece of equipment. People have different tastes, and that must be recognized and acted upon. Just because your friend has an exercise bike at home, doesn’t mean you should get one instead of say, an elliptical trainer that you would find more fun.

Often people are being advised to “watch television when you work out,” I, on the other hand, typically advise my clients, to “work out when you watch television.” When you are listening to your favorite music, you can also work out at the same time. If you have time to watch your favorite TV shows or again, if you have time to listen to some of your favorite albums, then, right there, you DO

have time to work out, which can be done at the very same time. You probably have noticed that there are television sets in fitness centers. This strategy can easily be applied within your home. So have the equipment right there in your television room, and get on it whenever you watch television. In fact, a sedentary life style created by people spending hours sitting in front of a TV can be totally turned around, so that watching TV becomes the thing that propels you along the new path of getting a lot of exercise into your life. You don't even have to go to a gym, you don't even have to go outside, and you don't even have to set aside extra time, just do it while you are watching your favorite TV programs in your own home.

Of course, you can also get good exercise and fresh air at the same time with an outside exercise such as walking, jogging or biking. However, you should only do these if you enjoy them. Since running can leave some people with wear and tear injury because of its impact nature, walking is more highly recommended because it is much safer.

It might surprise some of you that I believe that strength training is equally important to good health as aerobic exercise. Doing aerobic exercise can improve the strength of your muscles, but only up to a certain point because a particular aerobic exercise will provide only so much resistance, so that after a while, you are only maintaining the muscle you have already developed and not building any more muscle. The value of strength training for the health of every individual is becoming more and more recognized in the fitness world. It is now accepted that working out with heavy resistance provides benefits far beyond just being stronger and looking better.

Today using heavier resistance, moving at very very slow tempos, in both directions, and quickly reaching the point of failure, when you just cannot move the resistance any longer, is considered the best form of strength training. At the moment when your body tries but cannot overcome and move the resistance any longer, your muscle will signal your body to stimulate muscle growth to increase your muscle's strength, and also improve the metabolic functions employed in the use of your muscles, so that any future challenge can be more easily met. Maintaining a slow rate of movement in both directions eliminates the effects of momentum, and counters the effects of gravity as the weight inside the workout machine is being lowered. This system of slow training with heavy resistance creates a more intense and productive workout while lessening any potential injury to the body, both through the very slow speed of movement and the reduced number of repetitions. This is the form of strength training I recommend, both to achieve the results you desire and protect you from any injuries. Because of the large increase of the resistance you will be dealing with, this method of working out is best done only using exercise machines, rather than free weights. In addition, proper form must be maintained at all times, both to prevent injury and insure you will get a proper workout that will provide all the benefits that are intended. When people hurry through their strength training by doing many rushed repetitions instead of going slowly, and jerk the weight, twist their body, clench their teeth and hold their breath, they are doing wrong things that will only keep them from making good progress in a safe way. I want to further reiterate that no matter what type of weight training you do, it is essential that you breathe freely and never ever hold your breath.

The positive side of this increased effort from using much heavier resistance, and slower and fewer repetitions in your fitness center's machines, is that your sessions working out can be much much shorter in duration. With this new method that is more and more recognized as the best way to train, you can be finished with your complete workout in a surprisingly short time while achieving better results than you might have experienced the regular way. Strength training this way strengthens your bones, improves your cardiovascular health, improves your flexibility, makes your joints more stable

and less prone to injury, and by improving your metabolism, helps you replace fat with muscle! Your added muscle will make everything in life easier to do and make you feel more energetic, thus, raising your spirit and mood.

Some people promote weight training as the complete answer to becoming and staying fit and insist that there is no additional need to be active. The truth is that even were you to work out with very heavy weights a couple of times a week, if you aren't staying active the rest of the week you will not be able to maintain your health. The reason for this is that an integral part of keeping yourself healthy and young is the working of your body's lymphatic system. Unfortunately this aspect of staying healthy has not received the attention it really deserves. This system is particularly important for the health of anyone in recovery since its main role is detoxification. Most people who have abused drugs have taken in and inundated their bodily systems with toxins. It is very important for those in recovery to do all that they are able to remove these substances from their bodies as quickly and thoroughly as possible. And then, because of a need to continue to feel and be healthy, those in recovery should remain on a program that keeps their bodies detoxified and clean.

The lymphatic system is the metabolic cleanser of the body. It draws in and carries toward disposal the many substances that need to be removed for the cleansing and detoxification of the body's systems, including toxins, dead cells, cancer cells, nitrogenous wastes, trapped protein, fatty globules, pathogenic bacteria, infectious viruses, foreign substances, heavy metals, and other waste byproducts that the cells give off. However unlike the blood's circulatory system which has the heart to pump the blood through its system, the lymph system lacks a pump to move the lymph fluid with all its waste through its many capillaries and ducts toward disposal. It is absolutely vital that the lymph fluids continue to flow in order to eliminate waste from the body, otherwise the toxicity of the body will increase leading to poor health and disease. Using a set of one way valves, lymph is moved along the vessels of the lymph system by the movement and contraction of the muscles during activity. Now you understand why just working out once a week, is not enough even though that will give you more muscle, stronger bones and a better working metabolism to burn calories to become and stay thin. Spending the rest of the time sitting in your office 9 to 5 during the day, and in front of your television as a passive and sedentary person during the evening, will not keep your lymph system properly active to promote health. A sedentary life with little exercise is very unhealthy. Staying active with plentiful exercise is absolutely necessary to create and maintain good health. Without regular exercise, the toxicity of the body would build up because of a relatively inactive lymph system.

One very good exercise that is fun and can be done while watching television or listening to music is rebounding. Running or jumping up and down in place on a rebounder burns calories effectively. Using one of these mini-trampolines is remarkably gentle on ones joints and avoids the wear and tear of other similar activities. It has all the positive effects on your body as jumping rope or running, but without the jarring impact to the ankles, knees, and lower back that comes from striking the ground. It can burn as many or even more calories as these other activities for those who desire not just to get in some exercise, but to get and stay trim. Rebounding for health can be just as effective for fitness and weight loss as cycling or jogging.

But more importantly, in regard to our present discussion on detoxification during recovery, this bouncing activity, running or jumping on a rebounder, effectively moves and recycles the lymph within the lymphatic system. In the end, it is very effective for detoxification and for continuing to keep your body in a cleaner less toxic state. Whenever I have a sedentary client who I have helped

overcome drug abuse, who is not ready to undertake intensive aerobic activities, I always recommend that they get more exercise by purchasing and regularly using a good quality rebounder. They have fun jumping and running on it right in their own home, while getting the activity necessary to have a more toxic free, healthier body.

Those of you who have not been exercising and keeping your body in the best of health are going to be surprised and delighted with how much better you will be feeling and enjoying life when you have a stronger body and you are getting a lot of health enhancing exercise. By introducing more exercise in your life you are experiencing a new way of life that only grows stronger and stronger with each passing day. You find yourself giving yourself the gift of exercise and all of exercise's limitless benefits are yours. You are empowered as an individual in a new way of life that leaves you happy and impassioned about becoming more and more healthy and resourceful. You are feeling great physically, mentally and emotionally, and know that exercise is right for you and is leading you to the life you so deserve. As you experience your new, more profound life of exercise and taking care of yourself, all resistance from the past will have gently drifted away and is gone forever. You find yourself motivated in a way you never thought possible as all impediments have simply melted away and you realize exercising and being healthier and healthier is so right for you. Each time you exercise you create more limitless inspiration and experience more determination and drive that propels you easily and comfortably along your new brighter, healthier path in life. Optimistic, focused, empowered, you are now a new kind of person. You are a winner who looks and feels better and better, and all others recognize and honor this. You are a motivated, goal oriented person who becomes admired by those around you. A new healthier and happier life is yours today and in every passing future moment.