

Exercising at home

Exercise is essential for wellbeing as well as ensuring the ability to maintain the physical ability to do the things we need to do on a daily basis. Is it possible to exercise properly without having to join a gym?

Emanuela Iseppi (Manu), a personal fitness trainer with a fitness centre in Hobart, believes that it is possible to develop an effective personal fitness program without spending major amounts of cash. "The most important first step is to define in your own mind a goal that you want to achieve" Manu said. "This can be a seemingly small goal such as losing some weight or something more significant such as being able to run 5km. Whatever your goal is, having it defined will help you to achieve that target...and more".

Manu suggests that spending some time with a personal fitness trainer is important not only in defining your goals but also in setting up a program that suits your lifestyle. "Having a trainer to initially help you will reduce the possibility of injury as they will show you how to correctly use exercise techniques. This is important as any injury, such as a strain, will put you off exercise. The old saying of no pain, no gain is not necessarily true" Manu said.

It is possible to use your home as a venue for exercise and equip it for under \$50.00. One of Manu's favourite pieces of fitness equipment is a very simple length of rubber exercise tubing. "This is such a simple device to use and is perfect for strengthening exercises as it can be easily adjusted as your level of strength increases" Manu said. You can either purchase plain rubber exercise tubing or a more sophisticated version with handgrips from any good exercise store.



The next essential according to Manu is an exercise ball, sometimes called a Swiss ball or fit ball. Manu says that these are very easy to use and provide an effective way to increase core strength when combined with suitable exercise. These balls come in a range of shapes and sizes and one suitable for use at home will cost around \$25 - \$30.

Getting started on your exercise program consists of several simple steps. "I advise all clients who are new to exercise or who have some form of pre-existing condition to consult their GP" Manu said. "Tell the GP what you are planning to do and hoping to achieve and get their advice. If you have diabetes, talk to your educator about monitoring your blood glucose during exercise. You will find that in the early days your blood glucose levels may vary radically to what you expect" she said.

The next stage is to consult a good footwear specialist. "Wearing the correct footwear during exercise is very important" Manu said. "Incorrect footwear may cause discomfort or even may cause you to slip or stumble leading to injury. It's important that you enjoy the exercise and you must have the correct shoes for the range of exercises you are doing. Good cross training shoes can be used for stationary exercise as well as walking and jogging" Manu said. "I would recommend a good footwear consultant as a starting point. Choose the best shoes you can afford and get good quality socks to go with them" she added. Manu advises that comfortable loose fitting clothes should be worn appropriate for the weather and style of exercise.

The next stage is to choose a trainer with whom you feel comfortable. All gyms employ trainers and Manu recommends that you ask to see the trainer's qualifications. They should at least have the Certificate Level IV Personal Trainer qualification. If they don't have it then don't use them. When you first meet with your trainer they will perform a very simple fitness assessment and ask you some questions. They will discuss with you the reason as to why you want to exercise and what your goals are. They will then set up an exercise program that will start you off in an easy fashion. This will take into account your capability and your existing level of fitness. They will advise you on diet, rehydration, the exercise schedule and your targets. They will also teach you how to measure your heart rate and walk you through each exercise to ensure that you know exactly how it should be performed for maximum effect.

Manu believes that trainers provide a major resource for newcomers to regular exercise. "Being able to talk directly with someone who is professionally trained and accredited about your level of fitness in a



one-on-one situation gives you so much opportunity to learn about how your body works and why you have those little aches and pains" Manu said. "A lot of fitness training can be remedial but more importantly it can also be preventative as it improves core strength and coordination. In older people this is incredibly important as it can aid in preventing falls and other styles of injury" she said.

"Trainers can also provide ongoing counselling and encouragement. Don't be surprised if you find yourself actually getting excited about exercise as your level of fitness improves. Having a good relationship with your trainer really allows you to maximise the experience" Manu said. "This is why it's so important to get a balanced mix – good equipment, suitable clothing and footwear, the right trainer, the correct fitness assessment, a properly designed exercise program and ongoing support and encouragement" Manu added.

Manu believes that motivation is very important in starting and maintaining regular exercise. "People are naturally resistant to change and commencing regular exercise is all about change" Manu said. "A good way to overcome this resistance is to employ a trainer to get you started. A great way to maintain your new exercise program is to find a partner to exercise with. This may take the form of a friend, family member, colleague or even a neighbour. It's important, no matter who you exercise with, to ensure that you are both giving and receiving encouragement and that one isn't simply leading the other" Manu said.

Dtour MAGAZINE recommends obtaining an assesment from an exercise physiologist or suitably qualified fitness instructor before undertaking any new form of exercise program.

Exercise & Sports Science Australia have a web site with a useful search function to help you find an exercise physiologist in your area. The site is at www.essa.org.au

You may also be able to access an exercise physiologist via an EPC organised through your GP and funded through Medicare. Ask your GP for more information. **D**



Dtour MAGAZINE followed Manu in assessing and assisting Helen Holmes, a resident of Hobart, who wanted to get fit.



Helen chose a fitness centre through the recommendation of a friend. Manu performed a fitness assesment through the use of a stationery bicycle to measure Helen's heart rate.



The interview process allowed Manu to define Helen's goals with her and to discuss healthy food choices. The interview also allows the trainer to familiarise the client with the gym environment and equipment and the techniques of using it effectively.



Manu visited Helen's home and showed Helen how to use her newly purchased fitball and exercise bands. Manu also demonstrated how to use steps in Helen's backyard for stretching routines.



Helen and Manu found an area in Helen's neighbourhood that provided a suitable and safe walking environment. Manu measured out a distance and gave Helen a time and heart rate target to walk to.



With regular contact Helen can discuss with Manu any ongoing concerns she has, allowing Manu to modify the exercise routines as Helen's fitness levels improve.