

Stretching



The Sitting Back Stretches

Set that morning alarm clock ten minutes early in the morning. Then when you first wake up, sit on the edge of the bed with your legs slightly apart and bend from the waist as far you can until you feel the tension (not pain) in your back. Gently bounce back and forth to slowly stretch the muscles. After 5 or 10 bounces straighten up with your hands clasp over your head and count to 10 then repeat the stretching exercise, (start with 5 rotations and work your way up slowly adding 2 or 3 rotations each week.)

Standing Back Stretches

Now stand in front of a doorway and repeat this exercise standing up and bending over. This time when you reach over your head try to touch as far over the door way as possible. Again do 5 rotations and gradually work your way into doing a few more rotations each week.

Knee Strengthening Exercises

Another problem most morbidly obese people have is knee pain which often makes walking or using a stationary bike painful or impossible. Before getting on that stationary bike or deciding to walk that mile

or even 1/4 of a mile down the road or on a treadmill you really need to get those knee joints in better shape.

Hold onto the back of a chair with one hand, then alternating legs lift your leg and bend your knee as high as possible. Don't worry if the first few days you can barely get your foot off the ground and your knee doesn't bend much, just keep doing this every day for 5 to 10 rotations and in a short period of time you will be bending your knees like you are marching in a band. Again push yourself to the point where you feel tension but, no real pain.

Other Exercises You Can Do During The First Two Weeks

Depending on your fitness level here are some other exercises you can do during those first couple of weeks that will help to burn calories and strengthen a variety of muscles.

- Wall push ups (far easier than trying to get up and down off the floor yet will still help strengthen muscles)
- Use a regular straight back chair and simply sit and stand, sit and stand (only if you don't have hip or knee joint problems)
- You can begin strengthen your shoulder joints, arms, pectoral muscles and back (it also helps women keep their breast from sagging as they lose weight) simply by bending your elbows and holding your hands balled into fists in front of your chest and then force you arms, with the elbows still bent as far back as they will go, repeating several times with two or three bounces before bringing your fists back to your chest. As time goes on try this exercise holding a couple of cans of vegetables, then 2 pound weights, 5 pound weights and finally 10 pound weights
- Hula hoop. Yep that's right get a hula hoop and just see how long you can keep it going. It burns calories, works the waist and hips and is fun.
- No jump jumping jacks. Okay maybe at 300 to 400 pounds you can't get those feet off the ground but, doing jumping jacks without the jump will help burn calories, increase you heart rate slightly and building up those arm muscles. You can also try holding your arms straight out from your side and then turning them in small, medium, and large circles ten times each.

After the first two weeks as you start to feel more fit and more confident you can continue the beginning exercises adding more rotations and using light weights where possible. You can also:

- Begin to use resistance bands (get different levels of resistance and use them in creative ways)
 - Start walking 2 minutes once or twice a day and build up from there
 - Try doing squats with your back against a wall.

The whole idea is to start out exercising for about 5 or 10 minutes twice a day and then build up to 15 minutes twice a day and if possible 30 minutes once or twice a day. Keep in mind however that it could

take months to build up to this level of exercise and by then if you feel fit enough and comfortable enough you start using stationary bikes, mini trampolines, jump robes and other equipment to get in some aerobic workouts. When adding a new exercise or piece of equipment do so slowly and one thing at a time.

Begin with just a minute or two at first and then gradually work up to more and more time or difficulty. Not only will starting off with simple exercises help you to burn more calories, but it will also help you to feel more energetic and as your stamina improves so will your self confidence.

Note: Experts say that even a few minutes of exercise first thing in the morning will help you burn calories all day long.