



Longwick-based
personal fitness
trainer

Hilary Westall

explores exercise

and one-to-one training for
people needing more specialized
exercise considerations.



The benefits of regular, physical activity throughout life have been well documented, and it's evident that a physically active lifestyle reduces the likelihood of developing many major chronic conditions. A report by the Chief Medical Officer in 2004 stated that: "Physically active adults have a 20 to 30 per cent reduced risk of premature death and up to a 50 per cent reduced risk of developing major chronic diseases such as coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer."

"Take care of your body. It's the only place you have to live."
(Jim Rohn)

So if you think that your state of physical health prevents you from even contemplating a programme of exercise, you may want to think again. There are very few people out there for whom some sort of exercise is completely contraindicated. In fact, many medical conditions that warrant special attention can be significantly improved through exercise. Our worst enemy, in nearly every case, is inactivity.

Not fit to exercise?

Conditions requiring special attention that may be stopping you from taking that first step to fitness include:

- Hypertension (high blood pressure)
- Coronary Heart Disease (CHD)
- History of heart attack or chest pain
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Lymphoedema
- Osteoporosis
- Osteoarthritis
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Asthma
- Pregnancy – pre and post-natal
- Minor injuries or low-level chronic conditions
- Being older or retired

For many of these conditions – hypertension, for example, coronary heart disease and obesity – lack of exercise is a large contributory cause, along with other lifestyle factors including poor diet, a high intake of alcohol and smoking. Regular aerobic activity at lower intensities has been found to lower blood pressure in previously inactive men and women, regardless of age, and is therefore extremely beneficial.

"The poorest man would not part with health for money, but the richest would gladly part with all their money for health." (Charles Caleb Cotton).

Personal training for someone with a medical condition is ideal when embarking on an exercise regime. Qualified and competent trainers not only understand the benefits of exercise but also the potential risks. This is achieved through an initial interview to gather vital information regarding your current health status,

fitness level and general lifestyle. This approach will take into account any condition you may have, enabling your trainer to screen and assess your readiness for exercise.

If necessary, your trainer can refer you to your GP to obtain medical clearance prior to starting an exercise programme. The one-to-one attention you receive when commencing exercise will ensure that you train within your capabilities in a closely monitored and safe environment.

Personal trainers with a level 3 Advanced Instructor qualification are able to train people with medical conditions such as those listed above, although it is probably worth checking at the outset. Hilary's nursing background also equips her with a deeper medical knowledge and ability to deal with people with these special conditions.

Whatever special medical condition you may have, it's never too late to start getting more active – and you may be pleasantly surprised by what you can achieve.

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