

06/14/2006

The Key to a Fit Father's Day

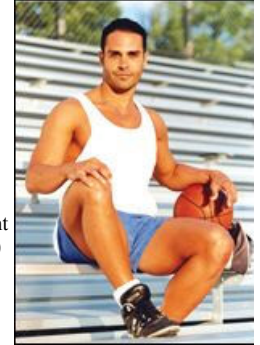
By Christine Haas

Looking for something to get Dad for Father's Day? How about a pair of running shoes? Or maybe you can dust off the old treadmill and purchase some fitness equipment for a home gym.

Because many fathers these days have traded their routine Saturday-morning workouts for the soccer league sidelines, why not help him ease back into a fitness routine?

High school sports may have conditioned us to think our cardiovascular fitness can only be improved with numerous sprints around the track. Fortunately, just a brisk walk three to six times a week for 20 to 45 minutes can improve one's cardiovascular condition significantly.

If your dad likes to run but has only been running after the kids these days, he should build his stamina by gradually increasing the amount of time and pace of his walk. Eventually, he can jog for a few minutes, walk for five minutes, then jog again until he can jog the whole 20 or 45 minutes. After a few weeks of this routine, he can increase his running speed with less risk of injury.



Advertisement

Register to Receive
"New Home
Listings Daily"

If your dad has an old joint injury from his basketball days, or any other joint problem, the elliptical machine and bicycle provide less stress to the joints and can be used in place of walking, jogging or running.

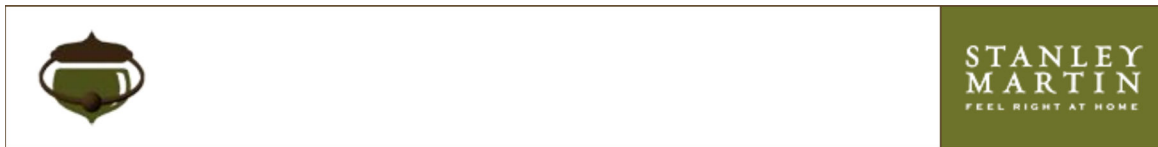
It is important for men who are getting back into shape to participate in a strength-training program. I usually advise my clients who are aiming for general fitness to perform one exercise of each muscle group two to three times, two or three days a week. Your dad should wait 48 hours for the muscles to recover before training the same muscles again.

Not too long ago we thought power lifting was necessary to increase strength and muscle size. Today, we use many different types of exercises that challenge all aspects of fitness with less risk of injury. Encourage your father to join a gym and meet with a trainer, or maybe hire a trainer to come to his home or place of work. The local library and bookstores have many exercise books explaining and demonstrating various exercises that can be performed in the commercial or home gym, or specifically with dumbbells, bands or other fitness tools.

Other effective exercises that can be performed at home without fitness equipment include push-ups and abdominal crunches. It is best to perform push-ups every other day, while crunches can be performed every day. Stretching is the third major component of the workout and can also be performed every day.

If your father is already going to the gym, you are fortunate because the gifts are numerous. Music players, motivating tunes, reflective jogging clothing, water bottles or other motivating fitness gadgets may be just what your father needs to encourage him to stay or even become motivated.

Christine H. Haas is an NASM certified personal trainer and a licensed nutritionist. She can be reached at info@nuweights.com or www.nuweights.com



©Times Community Newspapers 2006