

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY READINESS
City Center Fitness – Medical Weight Loss Program

By Lori Lawrie,

ARE YOU PHYSICALLY READY TO EXERCISE ?

Exercise and physical activity are among the healthiest things we can do for ourselves, but many people are reluctant to make exercise a part of their life. They may be afraid that exercise will be too strenuous, or that physical activity will harm them or cause pain. Research shows that actually the opposite is true. People hurt their health far more by not exercising. An active lifestyle is essential for those wanting to stay healthy and independent as they age. The benefits include improved muscle, joint and bone health and improved heart and lung function. With regular exercise also comes a decrease in risk of several types of chronic diseases. There is some form of exercise that is safe for people of all age groups, health conditions and shapes. The good news is – it is never too late to start.

But how do you know where to begin and what exercises are safe? Although mild to moderate exercise is safe for most people, if they have been inactive for a period of time or have any medical issues they should check with their doctor before increasing their physical activity level. If they are unsure, a medical screening questionnaire available at most Fitness Facilities or on the Health Canada Website is an excellent starting point.

The New Medical Weight Loss Program at City Centre Fitness conducts a series of medical and physical tests on each participant before they allow them to begin to exercise. First stop is a visit to the participant's family physician who completes a Medical Condition Checklist. This is a screening tool adapted from the guidelines of the Canadian Society of Exercise Physiology and records past medical conditions, medications and health risk factors.

Pia Jmioff, Certified Exercise Physiologist at City Centre Fitness says "In the first intake consultation, the process of medical screening is extremely important to ensure a safe program for the participants. Conditions such as Hypertension and diabetes that may have been previously undiagnosed, could be discovered at this point – and has been in at least 2 of our recent Weight Loss participants. These conditions have implications on the prescription of exercise and dietary recommendations. Through the health screening process, we can now work with the family physician, Integrated Health and our team of medical and fitness people to not only design a personalized exercise and nutrition plan but to provide education and support for these individuals."

The next stop for the Medical Weight Loss Program participants is an assessment from a Physiotherapist. As part of the medical team the physiotherapist deals with the

management and prevention of many physical problems caused by illness, disease, injury, aging or long periods of inactivity. Upon completion of this assessment the physiotherapist prepares a recommendation report which is reviewed by an exercise physiologist before a personal fitness plan is prepared.

Kirby Layng of City Centre Fitness says “We are using physiotherapy assessments in many of our new programs. For example all of the kids in our Athlete Injury Prevention Programs are assessed at Sports Clinic Physiotherapy. This is essential for identifying neuromuscular imbalances and structural deficiencies which are reported to the personal trainers before exercise is commenced.”

The last step before participants in the City Centre Medical Weight Loss Program begin a regular exercise plan is a visit with an in-house physician who reviews the medical forms and discusses any physical and emotional barriers to exercise. The physician ensures that the participants’ goals are realistic and safe. In any exercise plan taking on too much too soon can lead to problems.

Everyone is at a different level of fitness and has different personal fitness goals. Pia Jmioff is an Exercise Physiologist who designs individual exercise plans for the Medical Weight Loss participants and other clients at City Center Fitness. “Depending on the participant’s physical condition, we do an individualized fitness test that helps prescribe an appropriate and safe exercise plan. In some cases we recommend an exercise stress test be done at the hospital prior to any fitness assessment. The key to success is to start at the right level and progress slowly in order to avoid injury.”

Two Penticton Kinesiologists, Greg Sieg and Shelley Griffith provide personal training support to the Weight Loss participants and work with a variety of different clients at City Center. Everyone could benefit with personal training especially those who are new to exercise, have some physical restrictions due to injury or inactivity or whose current exercise plan is no longer giving them the success they desire.

This team approach to assessing ones readiness to exercise is essential in creating a personalized program that will successfully and safely incorporate physical activity into someone’s daily life. The Medical Weight Loss Program is one of many new Lifestyle Change and Injury Prevention Programs being offered at City Centre Fitness. For more information call 250-487-1481