



One to One

Wellness Centre | strengthen your health

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Exercise/Activity	Strength	Flexibility	Cardiovascular Efficiency	Pros: ✓	Cons: ✗
Strength Training	Yes, progressive resistance training is the only way to reliably build strength over time. Research supports an optimal dose of two times a week of intense muscular effort. ✓	Yes, if performed through the full appropriate joint range of motion. Resistance training can improve both joint mobility and stability. ✓	Yes! The heart responds to work performed by the muscles. This can be the most effective way of stimulating efficient CV function. ✓	Maintaining muscle mass while you age is the main purpose of exercise. It is the safest and most efficient means of addressing all factors of physical fitness.	May require access to equipment or instruction. Injury may result if not performed properly. Resistance training is hard work and is not necessarily fun.
Yoga	No, not really. It can be done in a way that utilizes body resistance to build strength, but it is difficult to progress and increases the likelihood of injury. ✗	Yes, definitely, but often to your detriment. Increased flexibility without a corresponding increase in muscle strength will result in injury or unstable joints. Pushing too far too fast is a sure recipe for pain. ✓	Somewhat. Improved breathing and relaxation can be very helpful for reducing blood pressure. ✓	Yoga is wonderful for helping you gain awareness of your body, control your breathing, achieve deep relaxation, and improve mobility.	Yoga does little to build strength or maintain muscle mass and often causes pain or injury when someone pushes too far.
Pilates	Minimal. It does not conform to the demands of progression. It places undue emphasis on the abdominals and can contribute to muscle imbalances. ✗	Stretching may help to improve mobility, but it is a physiological impossibility and a marketing ploy to claim that muscles can be lengthened. Muscles can contract and un-contrast – they do not elongate and Pilates will not make you long and lean. ✓	Minimal. Recommended breathing is contrary to what is appropriate for exercise or habitual breathing. Too much tightness in the abdominals can increase intra-thoracic and abdominal pressure and contribute to higher blood pressure. ✗	May have some indication for dancers for whom it was originally intended. Many claim to enjoy it and, therefore, it may have recreational value for some.	It is pseudoscientific and makes appealing, but untrue, claims. It distracts people from the real work of productive exercise that produces the strength they really need.
Running	Minimal. Perhaps some strengthening of the slow twitch fibers in the legs through a small portion of the range. Generally many areas of weakness in people who run without strengthening. If done excessively, it can actually result in loss of muscle tissue. ✗	Absolutely not. Limited flexibility is the bane of runners everywhere. A few gifted individuals who are naturally flexible will tolerate running better than most. Tightness is more often the rule than the exception. ✗	Yes. Positive adaptations will occur in the CV system; however, conditioning occurs mostly through adaptive changes in the muscle. Progression is still required. High intensity (eg. wind sprints) is more effective, but also increases the risk of injury. Increased systemic inflammation can counter the benefits. ✓	Can be done anywhere. Produces the “runner’s high” so many know and love. Can be a great stress reliever for some.	Can be a nightmare for the musculoskeletal system. Injuries and repetitive strain abound. That runner’s high is actually endorphins released in response to excessive stress on your body.
Core Training	Minimal. And completely unnecessary if you are following a reasonable exercise program that will actually strengthen your muscles. This is a bad rehab concept made worse by fitness faddism. ✗	No. If anything, it creates excessive stiffness through the trunk. In fact, this is exactly what many advocate. While this may be helpful for certain conditions of loading, it is not really trainable and is inappropriate for general fitness. ✗	See above re: Pilates. No meaningful stimulus. ✗	May be appropriate at a low level of rehabilitation for certain conditions.	There has been great debate over this for years, but in my opinion, core stability is a myth. The approaches developed for this concept range from silly to dangerous.