

Thank You for joining the Balance online fitness community. We are so pleased that you have taken this first step toward improving your health and enhancing your life.

Before you begin the program we want you to keep a few things in mind:

- **Always wear appropriate athletic shoes.** This will help prevent injury by cushioning the loads placed upon the feet during your work-out.
- **Stay Hydrated.** It is important to replenish the loss of fluid that occurs during exercise by drinking plenty of water. Drink about 10 oz of water before you begin your warm-up, drink another 10-15 oz, during the work-out and then again after.
- **Warm Up for about 10 minutes before working out.** This will also help to prevent injury. You can walk or jog in place, just allow your heart rate to gently increase and your muscles to warm up in preparation for stretching and heavier exercise.
- **Stretch after your warm up and again after the Work-Out.** After you are warmed up, stretch all of your muscle groups at least once. Hold each stretch for at least 30 seconds until you feel tension, but never pain. Do not bounce on stretches. Stretching increases flexibility and strengthens ligaments and tendons. There is a decreased risk of muscle imbalances, joint dysfunctions and injury. After your work-out, repeat your stretching routine. **Please do not skip the stretches!** Here is a link where you will find some basic stretches:
http://www.webmd.com/content/tools/1/slide_basic_stretch.htm
- **Maintain Proper Form and Breathing.** When you receive your work-outs via email, there will be specific instructions with each work-out, reminding you of proper form. Please pay close attention and follow these instructions in order to reduce the risk of injury. Try to maintain a slight bend in the knee and elbow joints when performing resistance exercises that involve weight bearing on these joints. Do not lock these joints. Remember, never to hold your breath while working out, especially during strength training. Proper breathing would follow the e=e formula. Exhale=Exertion. So if you are doing a bicep curl, you would exhale as you lift and contract, then inhale again as you lower.
- **Cool Down.** After you have performed cardio exercise, please allow your heart rate to slowly return to a resting pace. Do not abruptly stop exercising after you have been working at “cardio endurance” pace. Transition your body back to the resting pace in a gently manner.

Until you have remembered these steps on a consistent basis, print this out and post it where you work out. We want you to achieve your goals, enjoy exercise and make it a

part of your life-long lifestyle!