

# NATIONAL THERAPEUTIC RECREATION WEEK IN JULY

A special health-related observance is National Therapeutic Recreation Week from July 8-14, 2007. The purpose of National Therapeutic Recreation Week is to enhance public awareness of therapeutic recreation programs and services, and expand recreation and leisure opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Therapeutic recreation uses treatment, education, and recreation services to help people with illnesses, disabilities, and other conditions to develop and use their leisure in ways that enhance their health, functional abilities, independence, and quality of life. Some commonly used therapeutic recreations include aquatic therapy, tai chi, air mattress therapy, and animal-assisted therapy.

National Therapeutic Recreation Week, which was established by the National Therapeutic Recreation Society, has been celebrated during the second week of July every year since 1984.

During the nationwide celebration, agencies and individuals host health fairs, career days, festivals, wheelchair athletic events, workshops, receptions, information booths and open houses.

Recreational sports can provide participants with many physiological and mental health benefits. Check your local papers, websites and recreation centers for more information about activities in your community.



## HOW TO GET MOVING AND GET HEALTHY

Exercise and recreation benefits everyone, no matter what your age. And exercise doesn't have to be expensive or time-consuming. You can drastically improve your health with something as simple as walking each day. Here are a few steps to take to get back on the path to good health:

### **1. Assess yourself and create your overall health plan.**

Ask yourself a few simple questions, such as: What are your risk factors? Which changes would lower these risk factors? Do you have any physical restrictions? What activities would accommodate those restrictions? If you've tried to make changes in the past but failed, what prevented you from implementing the change? Are you ready to make changes now?

*(continued on next page)*

Sources: Health Net and the National Recreation and Park Association, American Medical Association: "Preventing Heart Disease: Making Lifestyle Changes." National Institutes of Health: "The Seventh Report of the Joint National Committee on Prevention, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Pressure." National Heart, Lung & Blood Institute: "Aim for a Healthy Weight: Key Recommendations," "Your Guide to Living Well with Heart Disease," and "Your Guide to Lowering High Blood Pressure."

## **2. Pick one healthy-lifestyle area to start with.**

You're more likely to be successful in making lifestyle changes if you work on them one at a time. Write down one goal, including what you want to accomplish and the steps it takes to get you there. Try to come up with a timetable for making the changes.

## **3. Line up your resources and supporters.**

Many health care professionals can help with lifestyle changes. Your doctor can steer you to these resources. Health educators, nurses, and counselors can help you with strategies for all the lifestyle changes. Friends, family, or co-workers who have “been there” can lend their own advice and support. Your employer or health care insurance plan may have support groups, gym memberships, and other programs you can take advantage of for little or no cost.

## **4. Start with a few small changes and make them part of your routine.**

Let's say you want to try the healthy diet. You know you need to add more fruit and vegetables to your meals, but how should you start? If you only eat a vegetable at dinnertime, try adding one at lunchtime, too. Have fruit as a snack instead of chips or cookies. Perhaps you want to add exercise into your life. You could start by parking your car further away at work or when shopping. Repeat these changes every day.

## **5. Reward yourself and keep at it.**

Rewards can help you stay motivated and keep you moving onto the next change. After you've made a lifestyle change part of your daily routine, celebrate: Rent a movie. Go to a concert. Take a trip to the beach. Then choose and start on another goal.

What might at first have seemed overwhelming can end up becoming an enjoyable, new way of living. And the benefit -- a healthier heart -- is well worth your effort.

**Decision Power<sup>SM</sup>** is a decision-support program including Health Coaches, support videos, information resources and online tools that help you make healthcare choices that are right for you. Log on to [www.healthnet.com](http://www.healthnet.com) > *It's Your Life – Wellsite* > *Get Decision Support*.