

## Southern University Land- Grant Campus Nutrition Fact Sheet



### The Importance of Exercise

#### What is Exercising?

Any vigorous body movement for 20 or 30 minutes to raise heart rate is the key to good health and it has the ability to prevent cardiovascular disease (heart disease). Exercise is a critical component of any weight loss or weight maintenance program.

#### What are the benefits of Exercise?

- Musculoskeletal system – Increases muscle strength and muscle mass, increases flexibility of muscles and range of joint motion, produces stronger bones, ligaments, and tendons, lessens chance of injury, enhances posture, poise, and physique, and prevents osteoporosis.
- Heart and blood vessels – Lowers resting heart rate, strengthens heart function, lowers blood pressure, improves oxygen delivery throughout the body, increases blood supply to muscles, enlarges the arteries that provide blood to the heart muscle, reduces the risk of coronary heart disease, helps lower blood cholesterol and triglyceride levels, and raises levels of HDL, the “good” cholesterol.
- Bodily processes – Improves immune function, aids digestion and elimination, increases endurance and energy levels, and promotes lean body mass; burns fat.
- Mental processes – Provides a natural release from pent-up feelings, helps reduce tension and anxiety, improves mental outlook and self-esteem, helps relieve moderate depression, improves the ability to handle stress, stimulates improved mental function, induces relaxation and improves sleep, increases self-esteem, and improves sexual function in both men and women.

#### How do we create an Exercise routine?

Create the time, energy, and motivation that you need to make exercise a part of your daily routine. If you kept your dietary intake the same as it is now and simply exercised for 20 to 30 minutes a day at a moderate intensity level, over the course of a year you could lose 20 to 25 pounds. Exercise is clearly one of the most powerful medicines available. Remember, the time you spend exercising is a valuable investment in your good health.