

Water aerobics: Swimming isn't the only thing you can do in a pool. Water workouts are ideal for those with muscle and joint pain because the buoyancy of the water reduces stress on these areas, while providing enough resistance for a deep workout. Workouts may begin in chest-deep water and progress to deeper water for added resistance. Some gyms now offer aqua cycling classes that combine water aerobics with spinning.

Dance and hip-hop classes: ZUMBA classes have been popular for quite some time. But many health clubs offer additional classes that employ dance to burn calories and tone muscles. Some gyms have developed their own cardio-based dance classes that get people moving to music in a fun way. Routines are fun and fast-moving, which may make them feel less like a workout and more like a social event. Starting a fitness program may be one of the best things you can do for your health. Physical activity can reduce your risk of chronic disease, improve your balance and coordination, help you lose weight, and even boost your self-esteem. The benefits are yours for the taking, regardless of age, sex or physical ability.

When you're designing your personal fitness program, consider your fitness goals. Think about your fitness likes and dislikes, and note your personal barriers to fitness. Then consider practical strategies for keeping your fitness program on track.

Starting a fitness program is an important decision, but it doesn't have to be an overwhelming one. By planning carefully and pacing yourself, you can make fitness a healthy habit that lasts a lifetime.

❖ By Nicole Myers

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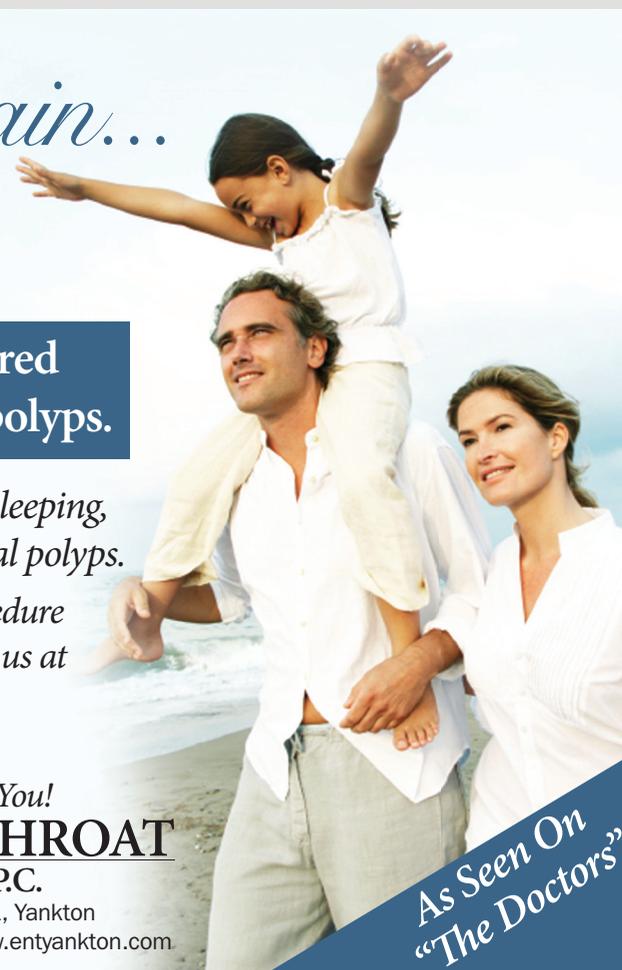


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