



fitness
**Barry
Franklin**

3 weeks' bed rest feels like 30 years

IN THE LATE 1960s, researchers revealed a startling scientific report on the harmful effects of prolonged inactivity.

Five young men of varied physical fitness underwent a three-week period of bed rest to assess the physiologic effects that might occur.

In general, the men showed many physiologic changes characteristic of premature aging. However, perhaps the most astounding change was an average decrease in cardiovascular (heart) fitness of 20-25 percent.

THIS DECREASE in fitness was equal to the decrease that normally occurs over 30 years, the researchers found.

In other words, it was possible to age functionally the equivalent of 30 years with as little as three weeks of prolonged bed rest.

These remarkable findings provided the basis for recommending slow walking or mild physical activity for most patients after a heart attack or heart surgery.

Recently, however, new research suggests that it is probably not the bed rest, by itself, which causes the pro-

nounced decrease in cardiovascular fitness.

IT APPEARS this deterioration simply reflected the lack of exposure to gravitational stress. This became evident in noting marked deconditioning in astronauts upon their return to earth.

Scientists now have shown that regular cardiovascular exposure to gravity — such as intermittent sitting or standing — can significantly lessen the decrease in cardiovascular fitness that normally occurs with prolonged bed rest and inactivity.

These findings have important implications for bedridden persons recovering from illness, injury or heart attack. By simply changing your body position throughout the day, you can help to prevent significant cardiovascular deconditioning.

It's an easy, yet effective, form of exercise.

A Farmington Hills resident, Barry Franklin, Ph.D., is co-director of cardiac rehabilitation at Sinai Hospital and on the faculties of two colleges.

How loud must a sound be to damage hearing? What ways can I reduce noise in my home?

When loud noises are described as "deafening," it's not just a figure of speech. The noise levels experienced daily have increased so gradually that we've failed to recognize their danger.

Any loud noise (the roar of a jet plane, amplified electronic music, sirens) puts a strain on the delicate receptor cells of the inner ear. Continued exposure to loud noises can eventually destroy these delicate cells and cause irreparable hearing loss.

Sounds are measured in decibels. These units measure the intensity of sound. Decibels are representative points on a sharply rising curve. The difference between decibel levels is much greater than it appears. The loudness doubles with each multiple of 10. For example, 80 decibels is twice as loud as 70 and four times as loud as 60.

consumer mailbag

THE AVERAGE person can safely tolerate continual exposure of up to 80 decibels. According to OSHA, the maximum safe exposure time to 90 decibels is eight hours; at 115 decibels — only 15 minutes. Decibels level is measured at the sounds' source. The rating decreases as the distance away increases. The noise problem is no longer confined to the workplace. Noise in the home is beginning to reach harmful levels. With more appliances and tools in use, as their numbers increase, so does the noise.

The kitchen is usually the noisiest room in the home. The combined noises

of garbage disposal, mixer, blender, dishwasher and penetration of noise from other areas can drive the noise level up to the 80-100 decibel range.

HEARING EXPERTS say that listening to music through headphones at 108 decibels for only five minutes a day may result in a hearing loss in just a

few years. The best way to prevent noise is to know your decibel levels:

0-1, Softest sound the ear can hear; 30, a whisper; 55-60, window air conditioner; 65-70, office with typewriter; 65-85, dishwasher; 70, moderate traffic; 80-85, hair dryer; 80-85, vacuum cleaner; 80-95, blender; 80-100, power mower; 110-120, disco music; 120, thunderclap; 120-130, jet at take off; 130, sound causes pain; 140, firecracker.

Next week: Suggestions to reduce the noise levels in your own environment.

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Computer processing offered

Oakland University's two-session hands-on computer course "Word Processing on the Apple II" will be offered Saturday on the Rochester area campus.

Offered through the Division of Con-

tinuing Education, no computer experience is required. Enrollment is limited. Tuition is \$40 for the course which meets from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. For information, call the Continuing Education office at 377-3120.

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