



The following definitions are as described by the Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 1995.

- Health - "the condition of being sound in body, mind, and spirit; *esp* : freedom from physical disease or pain"
- Fit - "sound physically and mentally: Healthy"
- Fitness - "the quality or state of being fit" and "the capacity of an organism to survive and transmit its genotype to reproductive offspring as compared to competing organisms"

It is easy to see why fitness becomes associated with health but often times does not truly promote it. The above definition of "fit" leaves out the spiritual dimension but is still considered "healthy", while the fitness definitions are based on the degree in which one is fit and competing with others.

These definitions, which are probably the most accepted in society, show that health is three dimensional but fitness is only two dimensional, and if someone has a high level of fitness then they must be fit and therefore healthy. This type of "fitness health" is driven by the mind, and without getting too philosophical, is lacking a spiritual component which keeps the body in line with true health as opposed to "fitness health." The main difference is not spiritual awareness, which is a bonus, but rather enjoying the pursuit of health instead of pursuing results from fitness. It is easy to get caught up in trying to fight or delay death with exercise and diet instead of simply enjoying the process of living healthfully.

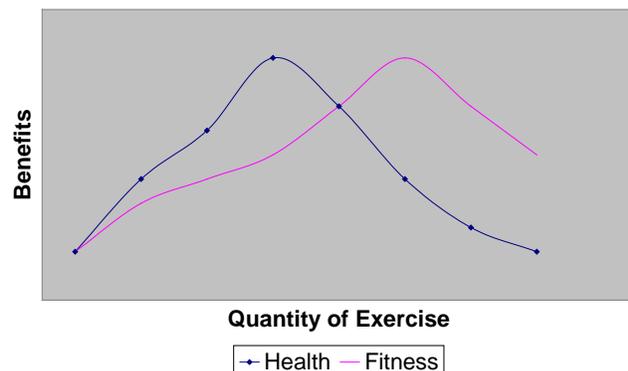
In order to be healthy one must have balance between the physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of their life. In regards to the physical dimension of health, it must have a balance between 1) nutrition 2) movement 3) rest. If any one is lacking or excessive, health is unattainable. For most of us the goal should be health instead of fitness training whenever possible, but it may be necessary for athletes and those who are physically active to find a balance between extreme training and health training, and therefore both types (fitness and health) of programs should be learned and then alternated properly.

Health is always in flux and requires constant adjustments through nutrition, movement, intensity, and thought process. There is a point where the amount of exercise or activity is detrimental to health, see graph below.

### Health vs. Fitness

Graph notes:

1. Optimum health requires much less exercise than optimum fitness.
2. Too much exercise can be just as detrimental as little or no exercise.



## HEALTH vs. FITNESS

### Exercise Goals

- **Health** - To stress the body in a way that encourages *all* of its systems to function most efficiently.
- **Fitness** - To stress the body in a way that achieves specific external results (esthetics, speed, strength, endurance, etc.).

These two goals can have very different impacts on the body, but ideally they complement one another. When exercising for health there is no such thing as a bad workout unless an injury or overtraining results. Understanding this perspective makes it easier to avoid the disappointment of failing to achieve, or overexertion to gain specific results (weight, time, repetitions, etc.).

When exercising for fitness the body's internal functions are often sacrificed to reach external goals. Exercising at too high of intensity and/or for too long a time can drain the entire body of its vitality, which can be replenished if treated appropriately, but will eventually have long term negative effects on overall health if this type of training is habitual. Unfortunately those who train at this level either do it on a consistent basis, which doesn't allow enough time for re-vitalization and speeds up wear and tear, or do it infrequently which often results in injuries. These people can look healthy on the outside, but to an experienced observer their body's systems are noticeably inefficient.

A few things are needed if health is a goal.

1. Patience
2. Knowledge of appropriate exertion levels (mostly intuitive)
3. Understanding that health relies on fitness more than fitness relies on health.
4. Realizing that *health is a state of being* and *fitness is being in a physical state*.

In order to obtain health the ego must be left out of goal setting. The ego wants to protect and maintain the self-image it has created throughout a lifetime. Examples of some ego images and goals are:

- Looking good (compared to others of course)
- Being good at something (compared to others of course)
- Achieving a physical goal, even at the expense of health.

These goals are accepted and encouraged by most of society because of one main idea; succeeding or winning for whatever it takes. This may be necessary to seriously compete in athletics or extreme activities, but it must be realized that these two examples do not promote health and should not be participated in unless the relationship between health and fitness is understood and accepted.

A wise person will have the ability to achieve both health and fitness goals at the same time. Some example goals are;

- Lower resting heart rate, blood pressure, body fat (if obese), and have more daily energy.
- Train for an event i.e. marathon, race, sport, etc, to the best of my capabilities while listening to my body for signs of overtraining and not be disappointed if I can't compete because the goal was to train to the best of my capabilities, not achieve results.

With all of this being said, it is possible to be *relatively* healthy if extreme training (most athletes) is properly utilized. The point to be made here is that extreme training is not necessary to become healthy and it is associated with less than optimal health, which could still be considered healthy, just not as healthy as possible.

The choice is simple; live for the mind (external results), or live for the body (internal results).