Consequences of Unhealthy Exercise

Unhealthy exercise can lead to serious health effects including:
- The maintenance of the eating disorder via distorted thoughts and behaviours
- Cardiovascular damage
- Vital organ dysfunction
- Bone damage
- Reproductive issues
- Muscular and metabolic issues
- Relapse/delayed recovery
- Takes away time from family/friends, work, study, and other important areas of one’s life

How Much Exercise is Right for You?

Movement should be used to support, and not harm, your overall wellbeing. Each dimension of health should be completely supported by movement, and not at all harmed. It is best to tailor your movement toward achieving wellbeing. It is advisable to consult with your GP, Psychiatrist or Paediatrician for regular medical monitoring (e.g., vital signs, blood test, ECG) as exercise is a stressor on the body. You may also find it helpful to see an Accredited Exercise Physiologist who has experience working with eating disorders for safe programming support. Speak with your treating team about the psychological challenges you may be facing around movement, such as the ones described in this handout, and finally, when you do exercise, make it social and make it fun!

Note: if you have recently (or in the presence of movement only) experienced heart palpitations, chest pain, dizziness, fainting, light-headedness, or you are using compensatory methods to purge calories, it is important to consult your GP, Psychiatrist or Paediatrician prior to engaging in any form of exercise.

Seeking Help

Attempts to reduce excessive exercise can elicit strong negative thoughts and high levels of anxiety. It is important to get professional help if you are struggling to reduce excessive exercise on your own.