

There is no Fitness Bank



Many of us hope that we will eventually be able to retire and the financial advisors of the world tell us that for this to happen we will need to save a great deal of money whether its in a bank account, an RRSP or a government pension plan. The whole idea is to start saving early and later in life you can quit working and enjoy your golden years. Unfortunately many people are under the false impression that physical fitness works the same way.

Let's take a moment to compare money and physical fitness. What do they have in common? Both are something that most of us want to have; both are something that you have to work hard for; both make it easier to enjoy many of the things life has to offer; and there are people who make a good living teaching us how to get both.

So how do they differ? Well, you can put money in the bank and do nothing with it for many years and it continues to grow because of accumulating interest. This is a good thing and is the principle upon which most retirement plans are based. Unfortunately, this is not the case for physical fitness because there is no such thing as the Royal Canadian Bank of Fitness. You can't exercise for the first half of your life and then coast for the second half of your life and expect to remain healthy and fit. You can't even borrow someone else's physical fitness and pay them back later and the government doesn't give out physical fitness grants.

While this may seem to be quite unfair it happens because of the way we are designed. One of the fundamental rules that governs your body's functioning is the "Use it or Lose it" principle! Basically stated, this principle means that when you stop using something the body assumes you no longer need it and starts breaking it down. For example if you stop doing core strengthening exercises you will quickly start to lose some of the core musculature that is so important to your everyday functioning.

While having a fitness bank would be a wonderful thing, the reality is that physical fitness is something that your body needs you to work at everyday of your life. It doesn't matter how old you are, where you live, what rank you achieve or even how much money you have saved. The bottom line is that to enjoy all the benefits that physical fitness has to offer, you have to stay active throughout your lifetime. This isn't easy but whenever you are feeling under-motivated try reminding yourself that in the world of physical fitness you can only coast in one direction – "Downhill!"

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Strengthening the Forces is CAF/DND's healthy lifestyles promotion program providing expert information, skills and tools for promoting and improving CAF members' health and well-being.