

What are Marriage Enrichment Exercises and Why do Them?

Marriage Enrichment Exercises are tools to strengthen your marriage. They consist of structured questions for couples and a structured way of discussing answers.

Just as regular physical exercise benefits our body, marriage enrichment exercises benefit our marriage.

Regular physical exercise benefits our bodies in many different ways. Some of the benefits are:

- Increased strength
- Improved stamina
- Increased blood flow to muscles, bringing nutrients to tissues
- Improved flexibility and balance
- Raised levels of endorphins (the natural substances in your brain that improve mood)
- Development of muscle memory for later exercise

Marriage Enrichment Exercises benefit our marriage relationship in similar ways. Some benefits are:

- Stronger relationship bonds and commitment for a lifetime relationship
- Revitalized relationships with new ideas and challenges
- Better communication techniques that improve negotiation skills and balance between listening and talking
- Greater intimacy that results in an increased sense of well-being
- Development of techniques to resolve future conflicts and issues

How do you start?

1. Select a private place and a time you will not be interrupted.
2. Set a period of time to devote to the exercise.
3. Respond individually and then share responses. Sit “knee to knee.”
4. If other issues are raised or there is not time to deal satisfactorily with the topic being discussed, set a time to get back together to complete the discussion.
5. If a certain exercise engenders negative feelings (or criticism), agree beforehand to “table” that exercise until a later time and substitute a “shared positive memory” time. Recall a past positive event that you have shared and spend some time talking about it together. Revisit the more difficult exercise at a later time or work through it with a group coach or therapist.
6. Don’t choose the most difficult exercises to begin – a logical progression: from sharing positive thoughts, memories and emotions to developing good communication skills to conflict resolution.

