

Physical Activity: Getting Started



Being physically active is part of a healthy lifestyle.

Benefits of Physical Activity

- Gives you more energy
- Improves mood and well-being
- Improves sleep quality
- Improves weight management and reduces obesity
- Increases flexibility and mobility
- Lowers blood pressure and cholesterol
- Reduces stress and anxiety
- Reduces the risk for many chronic diseases and illnesses
- Strengthens your heart, lungs, bones, and muscles

Increasing Your Physical Activity

Talk to your health care team first if you have any health problems. You should start increasing your physical activity slowly if you do not have a health problem.

- Drink water before, during, and after you exercise.
- Pick an activity you like to do. Walking is a great first activity to try.
- Start slowly and build up to a good pace. Don't try to do too much too soon.
- Try new activities, sports, or workout videos to make it fun.
- Wear comfortable clothes and shoes.

Things That May Hold You Back from Being Active

Joining a gym or buying equipment is expensive.

You can get more physical activity at home or outside in public parks. Walk around your neighborhood, play tag with your kids, find workout videos online, and download fitness apps. Physical activity can happen anywhere.

There isn't enough time in your day.

Make small changes in your daily routine. These tips will only take minutes, but together can add a healthy amount of activity to your busy days.

- Do ten jumping jacks first thing in the morning. Build up to more as you get stronger.
- Get off the bus one or two stops early or park your car farther away and walk.
- Use stairs when you can instead of elevators.
- Walk or bike to places that are near you instead of driving.

You are afraid to exercise because you haven't in a long time.

Start with something you enjoy or something easy like walking. Ask a friend to join you.

Aerobic Exercise and Muscle Strengthening

Your body needs both aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities.

Aerobic activities strengthen your heart and lungs, helping with digestion and circulation. Types of aerobic activity include any activity that increases heart rate for periods of time, such as walking, running, biking, swimming, and more.

Muscle strengthening activities keep your muscles strong, flexible, and lean and include weight lifting, yoga, Pilates, and resistance bands. Exercises like pushups, pullups, sit-ups, and squats also increase strength.

Physical Activity Guidelines

Aim for this amount once you have built up to a regular routine.

For Children and Adolescents (6-17 years)	Aerobic Activity	1 hour a day every day or more
	Muscle Strengthening	3 days a week include age appropriate muscle strengthening exercises as part of the hour of activity
	Bone Strengthening	3 days a week include vigorous exercises such as jumping rope or running as part of the hour of activity
For Adults (18+ years)	Aerobic Activity	150 minutes per week, such as 20 minutes every day or 10 minutes 2 times a day
	Muscle Strengthening	2 or more days a week work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms)

Information gathered from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/index.html

Tips to Motivate Yourself

Get other people involved

- Ask a friend to do one of your favorite activities with you.
- Ask co-workers to walk on their lunch break with you.
- Walk with your family in the park or in your neighborhood.

Have a purpose

- If health concerns are why you want to start exercising again, make a list and write down how being active can help. Look at the list when you don't want to work out.
- Pair exercise with a distraction or something fun such as listening to music, podcasts, or watching a show.
- Sign up for a race. Having a goal you are training for may motivate you.

Split it up

- If you can't find time to work out for a long period at one time try to work out for 10 minutes 2-3 times a day. For example:
 - Dance to your favorite music for 10 minutes while dinner is cooking.
 - Walk 10 minutes on your break at work.
 - Walk 10 minutes with your children after work.