

Physical Activity Tips

Getting Started

Physical activity is one of the most rewarding things you can do. Whether you are just getting started or looking for new ideas to add to your current activities, this guide is for you!

Regular physical activity can do many things to improve the quality of your life such as: having more energy; greater stamina; reducing stress; sleeping better; lowering your risk of heart attack, high blood pressure, stroke, and diabetes; strengthening bones; controlling weight; and improving your overall health!

Physical activity simply means movement of the body that uses energy. For health benefits, physical activity should be **moderate** or **vigorous** and add up to at least 30 minutes a day to provide health benefits. Being active for a longer time or doing more vigorous activities can provide even greater health benefits. No matter what activity you choose, it can be done all at once, or divided into two or three parts during the day. Even 10-minute bouts of activity count toward your total.

Moderate physical activities include:

- Walking briskly
- Hiking
- Gardening/yard work
- Dancing
- Golf (walking and carrying clubs)
- Bicycling
- Weight training (general light workout)



Vigorous physical activities include:

- Running/jogging
- Bicycling
- Swimming
- Aerobics
- Walking very fast
- Heavy yard work, such as chopping wood
- Weight lifting (vigorous effort)
- Basketball (competitive)



Some types of physical activity are especially beneficial:

- ***Aerobic activities*** – increases heart rate and breathing and improves heart and lung fitness. Examples are brisk walking, jogging, and swimming.
- ***Resistance, strength building, and weight-bearing activities*** – helps build and maintain bone and muscle strength by working them against gravity. Examples are carrying a child, lifting weights, walking, and yard work.
- ***Balance and stretching activities*** – enhances physical stability and flexibility, which reduces risk of injuries. Examples are gentle stretching, dancing, yoga, martial arts, and t'ai chi.

Here are a few simple suggestions to get you started on the right foot:



Safety First

Talk with your doctor before starting an exercise program, especially if you have heart or other health problems. Listen to your body. If you feel any of the following symptoms, you should stop exercising immediately: a slight strain or sprain; pain, pressure or fullness in your chest; dizziness, nausea or sudden undue fatigue. If they persist you should get help.

Start Slowly

Start slowly and build up. You can increase the duration and intensity of your activities as you become more fit. Doing too much too fast can make you lose interest in your activity or worse, lead to injuries.



Warm Up and Cool Down

Prevent injuries by warming up for a few minutes. Slow activities like walking work best to increase the blood flow to inactive muscles. After your activity, repeat the slow activity and incorporate some stretching to prevent muscle soreness. Hold each stretch for at least 15 seconds and don't bounce!