

Exercising to Stay Healthy, Adult

To become healthy and stay healthy, it is recommended that you do moderate-intensity and vigorous-intensity exercise. You can tell that you are exercising at a moderate intensity if your heart starts beating faster and you start breathing faster but can still hold a conversation. You can tell that you are exercising at a vigorous intensity if you are breathing much harder and faster and cannot hold a conversation while exercising.

Exercising regularly is important. It has many health benefits, such as:

- Improving overall fitness, flexibility, and endurance.
- Increasing bone density.
- Helping with weight control.
- Decreasing body fat.
- Increasing muscle strength.
- Reducing stress and tension.
- Improving overall health.

How often should I exercise?

Choose an activity that you enjoy, and set realistic goals. Your health care provider can help you make an activity plan that works for you.

Exercise regularly as told by your health care provider. This may include:

- Doing strength training two times a week, such as:
 - Lifting weights.
 - Using resistance bands.
 - Push-ups.
 - Sit-ups.
 - Yoga.
- Doing a certain intensity of exercise for a given amount of time. Choose from these options:
 - A total of 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise every week.
 - A total of 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity exercise every week.
 - A mix of moderate-intensity and vigorous-intensity exercise every week.

Children, pregnant women, people who have not exercised regularly, people who are overweight, and older adults may need to talk with a health care provider about what activities are safe to do. If you have a medical condition, be sure to talk with your health care provider before you start a new exercise program.

What are some exercise ideas?

Moderate-intensity exercise ideas include:

- Walking 1 mile (1.6 km) in about 15 minutes.
- Biking.
- Hiking.
- Golfing.
- Dancing.
- Water aerobics.

Vigorous-intensity exercise ideas include:

- Walking 4.5 miles (7.2 km) or more in about 1 hour.
- Jogging or running 5 miles (8 km) in about 1 hour.



- Biking 10 miles (16.1 km) or more in about 1 hour.
- Lap swimming.
- Roller-skating or in-line skating.
- Cross-country skiing.
- Vigorous competitive sports, such as football, basketball, and soccer.
- Jumping rope.
- Aerobic dancing.



What are some everyday activities that can help me to get exercise?

- Yard work, such as:
 - Pushing a lawn mower.
 - Raking and bagging leaves.
- Washing your car.
- Pushing a stroller.
- Shoveling snow.
- Gardening.
- Washing windows or floors.



How can I be more active in my day-to-day activities?

- Use stairs instead of an elevator.
- Take a walk during your lunch break.
- If you drive, park your car farther away from your work or school.
- If you take public transportation, get off one stop early and walk the rest of the way.
- Stand up or walk around during all of your indoor phone calls.
- Get up, stretch, and walk around every 30 minutes throughout the day.
- Enjoy exercise with a friend. Support to continue exercising will help you keep a regular routine of activity.

What guidelines can I follow while exercising?

- Before you start a new exercise program, talk with your health care provider.
- **Do not** exercise so much that you hurt yourself, feel dizzy, or get very short of breath.
- Wear comfortable clothes and wear shoes with good support.
- Drink plenty of water while you exercise to prevent dehydration or heat stroke.
- Work out until your breathing and your heartbeat get faster.

Where to find more information

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: www.hhs.gov
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): www.cdc.gov

Summary

- Exercising regularly is important. It will improve your overall fitness, flexibility, and endurance.
- Regular exercise also will improve your overall health. It can help you control your weight, reduce stress, and improve your bone density.
- **Do not** exercise so much that you hurt yourself, feel dizzy, or get very short of breath.
- Before you start a new exercise program, talk with your health care provider.

This information is not intended to replace advice given to you by your health care provider. Make sure you discuss any questions you have with your health care provider.