

Exercising To Stay Healthy, Teen

You are never too young to make exercise a daily habit. Even teenagers need to find time to exercise on a regular basis. Doing that helps you stay active and healthy. Exercising regularly as a teen can also help you start good habits that last into adulthood.

How can exercise affect me?

Exercise offers benefits at any age. For you as a teen, exercise can help you:

- Stay at a healthy body weight.
- Sleep well.
- Build stronger muscles and bones.
- Prevent diseases that you could develop as you get older.
- Start a healthy habit that you can continue for the rest of your life.

Exercise also provides some emotional and social benefits, like:

- Better time management skills.
- Joy and fun while exercising.
- Lower stress levels.
- Improved mental health.
- Less time spent watching TV or other screens.
- Learning to think about and care for your health and body.

You may notice benefits at school, like:

- Better focus and concentration.
- Completing more assignments on time.
- Better grades.

What can happen if I do not exercise?

Not exercising regularly can affect your thoughts and emotions (*mental health*) as well as your physical health. Not exercising can contribute to:

- Poor sleep.
- More stress.
- Depression.
- Anxiety.
- Poor eating habits.
- Risky behaviors, like using drugs, tobacco, or alcohol.

Not exercising as a teen can also make you more likely to develop certain health problems as an adult. These include:

- Very high body weight (*obesity*).
- Type 2 diabetes (*type 2 diabetes mellitus*).
- High blood pressure.
- High cholesterol.
- Heart disease.
- Some types of cancer.

What actions can I take to exercise regularly?

Most teens need about an hour of exercise each day.

- Do intense exercise (like running, swimming, or biking) on 3 or more days a week.
- Do strength-training exercises (like weight training or push-ups) on 2 or more days a week.
- Do weight-bearing exercises (like jumping rope) on 2 or more days a week.

To get started exercising, or to start a regular routine, try these tips:

- Make a plan for exercise, and figure out a schedule for doing what is on your plan.
- Split up your exercise into short periods of time throughout the day.
- Try new kinds of activities and exercises. Doing this can help you can figure out what you enjoy.
- Play a sport.
- Join an athletic club.
- Ask friends to join you outside for a bike ride, run, walk, or other activity.
- Take the stairs instead of an elevator.
- Walk or ride your bike to school.
- Park farther away from entrances to buildings so that you have to walk more.



Where to find support

You can get support for exercising and staying healthy from:

- Parents, friends, and family. Find a friend to be your exercise buddy, and commit to exercising together. You can motivate each other.
- Your health care provider.
- Your local gym and trainer.
- A physical education teacher or a coach at your school.
- Community exercise groups.

Where to find more information

You can find more information about exercising to stay healthy from:

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: <https://www.hhs.gov>
- The American Academy of Pediatrics: www.healthychildren.org

Summary

- Even teenagers need to find time to exercise regularly so they can stay active and healthy.
- Exercising on a regular basis can help you focus better in school and lower your stress. Most teens need about an hour of exercise each day.
- Consider asking friends and family if anyone wants to be your exercise buddy and commit to exercising together. You can motivate each other.

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.