

Health tip: Get up & go



How much exercise is needed for good health? The good news is you don't have to be an iron man. 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days of the week may provide many of the same benefits as strenuous exercise.

Physical activity is anything that gets the body moving, including walking. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that adults get 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic activity a week (or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity aerobic activity) and 2 or more days of a week of muscle strengthening activities for all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, chest, shoulders and arms). It is also recommended that children and adolescents are active for at least 60 minutes every day.¹

A moderate exercise program may help improve:

- Heart and lung efficiency
- Muscle strength and flexibility
- Fat burning, which may help control weight
- Quality of sleep
- Overall well-being
- The reduction of other health risks

So what is vigorous and moderate activity?

Vigorous activity is when you feel challenged by the activity, and when your breathing is hard enough so that conversation becomes difficult and broken. Just think of jogging, swimming continuous laps, or riding a bike uphill, which causes rapid breathing and a faster heart rate.

Here are some examples of activities that are considered vigorous intensity:

- Jogging or running
- Swimming laps
- Riding a bike fast or up hill
- Playing single tennis or basketball

Moderate activity is a little bit less than vigorous, where you can speak but you feel you are exerting yourself and making an effort. Just think of activities like walking briskly, mowing the lawn, dancing, swimming, or bicycling on level terrain.

Getting 30 minutes of moderate activity on most days, along with two or more days of muscle strengthening activities, has been proven to provide health benefits.⁴ Here are some examples of activities that are considered moderate intensity:

- Fast walking
- Doing water aerobics
- Riding a bike on level ground or with a few hills
- Pushing a lawnmower

Did you know?

According to the CDC, physical activity can make you feel better, function better, and sleep better. Just one session of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity reduces anxiety, and even short bouts of physical activity are beneficial. Being physically active also fosters normal growth and development, improves overall health, can reduce the risk of various chronic diseases² Yet 25.3% of Americans remain physically inactive.³

Consider these tips to help add physical activity into your daily life:



Wake up a little earlier. Start by setting your alarm clock just five minutes earlier. Do stretches and jumping jacks before getting in the shower, or follow a short exercise DVD or app.



Find a workout buddy. Exercising with a friend can be more fun than working out alone, and it's a good motivator. Ask a coworker to go for a walk during lunch or see if a neighbor wants to walk after work.



Schedule your fitness activities. If you put exercise on your calendar like other appointments, you may be more likely to do it.



Create a home (or desk) gym. If you have equipment always at the ready, it may be easier to steal five minutes to use it. A jump rope, a stability ball, exercise bands and dumbbells may not cost much or take up much room.



Exercise while you work. You may raise your activity level and productivity with neck rolls or arm raises (push hands out to the side and then up toward the ceiling). Or do a few modified push-ups on the edge of your desk.



Park your car further away. Get more steps in each day by picking the last parking spot available wherever you go.

Did you know?

Getting enough water each day is an essential part of good health. Water helps your body to keep a normal temperature, lubricate and cushion joints, and avoid dehydration. Dehydration can cause confusion, result in mood change, cause your body to overheat, and lead to constipation.

A few recommendations to follow include:

- carry a water bottle with you that can be refilled during the day
- choose water over sugary beverages
- opt for water when dining out

Other healthier beverages include plain coffee or tea, sparkling water, low fat or fat-free milk, almond or soy milk, and 100% fruit or vegetable juice.⁵



¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Walking. <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/walking/index.htm>. June 2022. Accessed August 2023.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Physical Activity Basics. <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/index.htm>. February 2022. Accessed August 2023.

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Adult Physical Inactivity Prevalence Maps by Race/Ethnicity. <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/data/inactivity-prevalence-maps/index.html>. February 2022. Accessed August 2023.

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, How much physical activity do adults need? <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/adults/index.htm>. June 2022. Accessed August 2023.

⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Water and Healthier Drinks. https://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy_eating/water-and-healthier-drinks.html. June 2022. Accessed August 2023.

This information is for general informational purposes only and is not intended nor should be construed as medical advice. Individuals should consult an appropriate medical professional to determine what may be right for them.