

## Exercise: A Healthy Habit to Start and Keep

Nearly one-third of American adults are obese and at risk for numerous life-threatening health conditions. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 50% of American adults do not get enough physical activity to achieve any health benefits from it. It is recommended that all adults should participate in at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity on five or more days of the week. Learn how exercise can improve your overall health and why it's a habit worth keeping.

### Benefits of Exercise

Regular exercise and physical activity are extremely important and beneficial for long-term health and well-being. Here are just a few of the many health benefits regular physical activity provides:

- Reduces the risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, osteoporosis, diabetes, and obesity.
- Lowers total blood cholesterol and triglycerides, and increases good cholesterol.
- Helps people achieve and maintain a healthy body weight.
- Relieves stress and anxiety.
- Helps build and maintain healthy bones, muscles and joints.
- Improves range of motion.
- Improves quality of sleep.
- Increases energy and endurance.
- Promotes psychological well-being.



### Getting Started

The first step in any exercise program is to talk to your doctor about how much exercise is right for you. Individuals with chronic diseases, such as a heart

condition, arthritis, diabetes, or high blood pressure should ask their doctor about physical activities that are appropriate for them.

### Types of Exercise

There are many different types of exercise. Any physical activity is good, but regular aerobic exercise will help your body use oxygen more efficiently so your heart, lungs and muscles will be stronger and healthier. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

#### Moderate-Intensity Activities (30 minutes, 5 days or more a week)

Walking briskly	Swimming for recreation
Mowing the lawn	Bicycling
Dancing	Yoga

### Choose to Move

When beginning any exercise program, start out slowly by doing a few minutes of physical activity each day, gradually working up to 30 minutes or more of a moderate-intensity activity. You can also add movement to your day by taking the stairs instead of the elevator, going for a walk during breaks at work or doing housework at a fast pace. No matter how you choose to get moving, the best exercise is the one you enjoy and will continue to do.

### For more information:

American Academy of Family Physicians: [www.familydoctor.org](http://www.familydoctor.org)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

National Institutes of Health: [www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov)

Shape Up America!: [www.shapeup.org](http://www.shapeup.org)

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, WebMD and the American Academy of Family Physicians



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