

Becoming Physically Active



Recommendations

- CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) recommends 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity most days of the week.
- To achieve and maintain a healthy weight, particularly after you have lost weight, you may need to obtain 60 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity each day. This can be done in increments of 10 minutes throughout the day.

Types of Physical Activity

- Physical activity may include structured activities such as walking, running, basketball, or other sports.
- It may also include daily activities such as household chores, yard work, or walking the dog.

Pick a combination of structured and daily activities that fit your schedule.

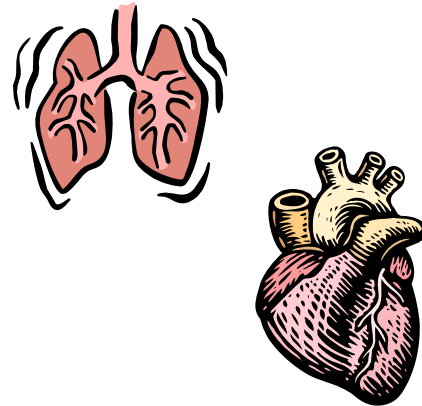
Beginning a Physical Activity Program

- If you have been inactive, start slowly and work up to 30 minutes a day at a pace that is comfortable for you.
- If you are unable to be active for 30 minutes at one time, accumulate activity over the course of the day in 10- to 15-minute sessions.

If you are living with a chronic disease (heart condition, arthritis, diabetes or high blood pressure) you should talk to a health care professional before beginning a new physical activity program.

Health Benefits of Physical Activity

- Regular physical activity greatly reduces the risk of dying from coronary heart disease and decreases the risk for developing stroke, colon cancer, diabetes and high blood pressure;
- Builds strong muscles, bones, and joints;
- Helps control your weight and increases your chances for successful weight loss;
- Improves flexibility and balance;
- Reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression;
- Improves mood and sense of well-being; and
- Helps you sleep better.



Aerobic Activity Tips

- You can meet your goal of at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity by participating in aerobic activities.
- Aerobic exercise includes any activity that increases your heart rate and makes you breathe harder than when you are resting.
- When you are moderately active, you may breathe harder and find it more difficult to talk, but you should still be able to carry on a conversation. This guideline is known as the **“Talk Test”** and correctly gauges a person's appropriate level of exercise.
- If you are just beginning, slowly work up to moving at a moderate-intensity pace. For example, if you have been walking at a leisurely pace or stroll, consider increasing your pace. You should still be able to carry on a conversation, but it will be slightly more difficult to talk.

Getting Started!

To add more physical activity to your daily life, try:

- Taking a brisk walk around the block with family, friends, or coworkers.
- Raking the leaves or doing other chores around the house.
- Walking up the stairs instead of taking the elevator.
- Mowing the lawn using a push mower.
- Taking an activity break at work or home. Get up and stretch or walk around.
- Parking your car farther away from entrances of stores, movie theatres, or your home and walk the extra distance when it is safe to do so.

Strength Training

Strength training is another way to meet the recommended minimum of 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity each day.

- Strength training will also help you burn extra calories and build strong muscles, bones, and joints.
- Plan to do strength training workouts 2 to 3 days each week. Allow 1 full day of rest between workouts to allow your muscles to recover.
- If you are new to strength training or physical activity in general, consider seeking advice from a professional who can plan an individualized program to help you work out safely and effectively.
- You might find it helpful to work with a personal trainer who has a degree in exercise physiology or is certified through a national certification program such as the American College of Sports Medicine or National Strength and Conditioning Association. Some people find working with a personal trainer to be beneficial, supportive and motivating in helping to meet personal physical activity goals.

Building Strong Muscles and Bones with Strengthening Exercises can include

- Lifting weights.
- Using resistance bands (Resistance-band strength training works smaller muscle groups and increases muscle definition by using rubber or latex-free resistance-bands).
- Using stability or medicine balls (Use of these balls helps to minimize spinal stress by strengthening and stretching muscle groups).
- Doing push-ups and abdominal crunches.

For more information on beginning a strength training program:
www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/growing_stronger/why.htm.
www.strongwomen.com.



Mind and Body Exercise

- In addition to aerobic activity and strength training, you may wish to include other forms of exercise in your physical activity program.
- Alternatives to traditional exercise provide variety and fun. They may also help reduce stress, increase muscular strength and flexibility, and increase energy levels. Examples of these exercises include yoga, Pilates, and tai chi.

Weight Control

- Physical activity helps you control your weight by using excess calories that would otherwise be stored as fat.
- Food contains calories, and all physical activity uses calories.
- Balancing the calories you eat with the calories you use through physical activity will help you reach and maintain a healthy weight.



(Source: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases-NIDDK)

How to Begin a Walking Program

Walking is often cited as a great way to start getting healthy.



- It is easy on the body and doesn't require anything more than comfortable shoes.
- It is also a great indoor activity when the weather makes you want to stay inside.

If walking is difficult for you, alternatives such as swimming, cycling, and weight training are great ways to improve your health, too.

Pedometers

Many people choose to wear a **pedometer** and set a goal to walk a certain number of steps each day.

- A pedometer is a small device that clips on the waistband.
- It counts the number of steps walked.
- Many pedometer programs refer to walking 10,000 steps per day as a goal.

In these types of programs, **all** accumulated steps are counted throughout the day. Depending on how active you are, 10,000 steps may or may not be a reasonable goal. For example, if you sit at a desk for 7-8 hours a day you are likely to walk between 3,000-5,000 steps throughout your entire day.

However if you walk to work, park your car farther from the building, and take the stairs instead of the elevator, your step counts could be much higher!

Also try including a walk at lunch or walk during other breaks throughout the day. A brisk 10-15 minute walk can add an additional 1,000 to 1,500 steps to your day.

10,000 steps is the equivalent of approximately 5 miles.

This may seem like an overwhelming distance but by adding extra walking into your daily routine, it is achievable!

To help you determine how many steps you walk in an average day, consider using an activity log. You can challenge yourself by recording daily steps in your activity log, with the goal of increasing your activity a little more each day. Try an on-line activity tracker from the US Department of Health and Human Services at: <http://www.smallstep.gov/login/login.cfm> or from the President's Challenge at: www.presidentschallenge.org to log your success.

Don't let the activity end when you get home!

Even a very active person can rarely get 10,000 steps during a workday. While at home you can increase your steps by limiting your amount of sedentary time. If you are sitting down for more than a half hour at the computer or TV, take an activity break.

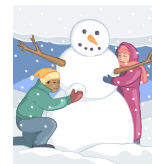
Studies have shown that sneaking activity into our daily routines can make a difference. Although it may not seem like exercise, walking around while on a portable phone, walking the dog a little longer than usual, parking the car and walking to the mail box, walking your child to school, or doing errands on foot increases the time you spend moving and can have a positive impact on health.



Staying Physically Active in the Winter

During the winter, we experience decreased daylight hours, increased bitter winds, frigid temperatures and thoughts of just wanting to stay inside until spring! However, with a little planning and creative thinking it is possible to get the recommended "30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity most days of the week." Below are a few things you can do to stay active in the winter:

- If it is too dark to walk in the morning or at night, try walking during lunch or work breaks. If it is too chilly outside, walk inside the building, either up and down a few flights of stairs or around the inside perimeter of the building, floor by floor.
- Is it too cold or icy to walk outside? Try walking at the mall or at a museum in your area, either after work or on the weekends.
- You are never too old to go sledding or to build a snowman or other snow sculpture!
- Shovel snow instead of using a snow blower or snowplow. If your driveway is too long or the snow is heavy, wet or thick, consider shoveling walkways, stairs or other smaller snow covered areas.
- Be active inside your home. Start your spring cleaning early! Mopping floors, cleaning windows and organizing closets will keep you active and you'll have less to do indoors when spring arrives and you would rather be outside.
- The average adult watches between 28 and 32 hours of television a week. Track your television viewing time. If it is higher than you realized, especially during the winter months, have a plan to turn just $\frac{1}{2}$ hour a day of TV viewing time into something more physically active.



If you do participate in outdoor winter activities remember to bundle up and play it safe!

- Dress in layers. Take off layers as you get warm. Add them back when you start to cool down. The goal is to stay warm without getting sweaty.
- Wear a hat, gloves and boots. You lose most of your body heat from your head. Also, hands and feet are usually the hardest to keep warm. If you anticipate purchasing new boots this season, consider those with tread that would be safe for walking.
- Try to avoid cotton, especially as your first layer. Once cotton is wet (from the snow or your sweat), it stays wet. Wool or synthetics (such as polypropylene) are a better option. Although more expensive, you may be able to purchase at discount or outlet stores.

Most importantly, if you love the cold weather, now is a great time to start enjoying those outdoor activities. If you struggle with the change to colder weather, try to come up with activities to help you enjoy and appreciate the season a bit more.



Steps, Miles and Minutes

Use the chart below to convert number of steps walked to miles. You can also use the chart to determine how many minutes it will take you to walk a certain amount of steps.

The below conversions are based on walking at a 'brisk pace.' A brisk pace is defined as walking at a pace of 3 to 4 mph

Steps	Miles	Minutes
500	0.25	5
1,000	.50	10
2,000	1.0	20
3,000	1.5	30
4,000	2.0	40
5,000	2.5	50
6,000	3.0	60
7,000	3.5	70
8,000	4.0	80
9,000	4.5	90
10,000	5.0	100



Step Conversions

Your pedometer works whenever you are taking steps. For those times when you choose an activity other than walking, check the chart below to determine the activity's equivalent number of steps.

To convert activity steps, simply multiply the number of minutes you did the activity by the number of steps indicated on the chart. For example, 30 minutes of mowing equals 4,050 steps (30 minutes x 135).

If your activity is not listed below, find the one(s) most similar to it on the list and estimate the activity's step value. You can also estimate steps by knowing that 2,000 steps equals one mile.

Number of steps per minute for selected activities.

Aerobics, high intensity	190	Gardening, hoeing (moderate)	93
Aerobics, low intensity	115	Gardening, weeding (seated/kneeling)	73
Aerobics, step	145	Golfing, walking, no cart	100
Badminton, game	150	Golfing, with a cart	70
Badminton, recreational	98	Handball, competitive	230
Basketball, game	220	Handball, recreational	142
Basketball, recreational	130	Hiking	155
Bowling	55	Hiking, 10 lb. load	180
Boxing, competitive, in a ring	213	Hiking, 30 lb. load	235
Boxing, non-competitive	131	Horseback riding, leisurely	31
Canoeing, leisurely (2.5 mph)	70	Horseback riding, trotting	102
Cycling, 10 mph	93	Housework, general, vacuuming	90
Cycling, 15 mph	160	Housework, mopping floors	85
Cycling, 20 mph	200	Housework, scrubbing the floor	140
Cycling, 5 mph	55	Housework, window cleaning	75
Dancing, fast	175	In-line skating, leisurely	84
Dancing, slow	55	Ice skating, competitive	170
Dancing, socially (rock, disco, etc.)	100	Ice skating, leisurely	95
Elliptical trainer (fast)	270	Judo, competitive	185
Elliptical trainer (medium)	200	Mowing (push mower)	135
Firewood, carrying	176	Orienteering	151
Firewood, chopping	300	Painting (houses, fences, etc.)	80
Firewood, sawing with handsaw	113	Ping pong	90
Firewood, stacking	89	Racquetball, competitive	205
Gardening, (heavy)	155	Racquetball, recreational	138
Roller skating, moderately	173	Stair climbing at 100 stairs/minute	311
Rowing, heavy	289	Swimming, 25 yards/minute	120

Rowing, moderately	150	Swimming, 50 yards/minute	225
Rowing, leisurely	75	Swimming, 75 yards/minute	290
Running, 10 mph (6 min./mile)	350	Swimming, back stroke at 1 mph	111
Running, 5 mph (12 min./mile)	185	Swimming, back stroke at 2 mph	196
Running, 6 mph (10 min./mile)	230	Swimming, breast stroke at 1 mph	89
Running, 8 mph (7.5 min./mile)	305	Swimming, breast stroke at 2 mph	178
Scuba diving	190	Swimming, crawl stroke at 1 mph	91
Shopping for groceries	60	Swimming, crawl stroke at 2 mph	156
Skiing, cross country, intense	330	Swimming, treading water	98
Skiing, cross country, moderate	220	Tennis, doubles	110
Skiing, cross country, slowly	110	Tennis, singles	160
Skiing, downhill, slowly	130	Volleyball, game	120
Skiing, water	160	Volleyball, leisurely	70
Skipping rope, fast	285	Walking in water, leisurely	49
Skipping rope, moderate	167	Washing the car	75
Snow shoveling	195	Waxing the car	100
Snow shoveling, heavy	278	Weight lifting (abdominal only)	64
Soccer, competitive	195	Weight lifting (arms only)	42
Soccer, recreational	144	Weight lifting (back only)	80
Squash	205	Weight lifting (legs only)	96
Stair climbing machine	160	Weight lifting (shoulders only)	69
Stair climbing at 26 stairs/minute	89	Weight lifting 40 sec. between sets	255
Stair climbing at 39 stairs/minute	133	Weight lifting 60 sec. between sets	190
Stair climbing at 52 stairs/minute	180	Weight lifting 90 sec. between sets	125
Stair climbing at 78 stairs/minute	267	Yoga	100
Stair climbing at 91 stairs/minute	309		

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Stretching + Warm-up Tips for Injury-Free Walking

Light stretching after warm-up and/or after cool down is recommended.

- Stretching should be performed slowly, avoiding bouncing or jarring movements.
- Stretch only as far as you feel comfortable. Do not over-extend yourself.

To help reduce injury:

- Walk with your chin up and your shoulders held slightly back.
- Walk so the heel of your foot touches the ground first and roll your weight forward.
- Swing your arms at a 90 degree angle as you walk.

You might also think of your walk in three parts. For example, if you are walking 15 minutes total:

- Walk slowly for 5 minutes.
- Increase your speed for the next 5 minutes.
- Finally, to cool down, walk slowly again for 5 minutes.

To avoid stiff or sore muscles or joints, start slowly. Over several weeks, begin walking faster, going further and walking for longer periods of time.

The more you walk, the better you will feel!



How to Increase Daily Steps

Ideas include:

- Plan active weekends (walking, hiking, cycling, snow shoeing).
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Park at the far end of the parking lot (an easy way to add 5-10 activity minutes).
- Get up from your desk throughout the day to stretch and walk.
- Take a walk at lunch or on your break.
- Replace 30 minutes of TV time with a walk.
- Walk your dog.
- Walk instead of driving your car short distances.
- Play active games with your children (tag, hide-n-seek, charades, dance).
- Get support. Ask a friend, family member or co-worker to join you for a walk.
- Mow the lawn with a push mower.
- Rake leaves.
- Shovel snow.



Walk and Socialize!

Walking does not have to be a solitary event! In fact many 'walkers' enjoy the social support of walking with a 'buddy' or in a group.

- Enlist the help of a friend, neighbor or co-worker in your new physical activity venture!
- Make walking an event to spend time together with friends or family. Children, friends and your dog benefit from walking.
- This can be a great opportunity to talk with your children, spend time with friends and give your pet some exercise too!
- Friends, family or co-workers may help motivate you to walk on days when you might not want to.
- Everybody has days when they'd rather stay inside (for one reason or another). Knowing there is someone relying on you to walk with, may be all it takes to get you outside and moving!

