



Physical Activity Guidelines



Engaging in regular physical activity will promote and maintain health, and reduce the risk of chronic disease and premature death.

Key Guidelines for Healthy Adults: Ages 18-65

Aerobic

- Do moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity for at least 30 minutes on five days each week.
- **Or** vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity for at least 20 minutes on three days each week.

Muscle Strengthening and Endurance

- Perform 8-10 exercises for 10-12 repetitions of each exercise, using the major muscle groups. Do at least twice a week on non-consecutive days.

Moderate-intensity physical activity means working hard enough to raise your heart rate, yet still being able to carry on a conversation.

Key Guidelines for Older Adults: ≥ 65 yrs old and adults age 50-64 with clinically significant chronic conditions and/or functional limitations

Aerobic

- Do moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity for at least 30 minutes on five days each week.
- **Or** vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity for at least 20 minutes on three days each week.

Muscle Strengthening and Endurance

- Perform 8-10 exercises for 10-15 repetitions of each exercise, using the major muscle groups. Do at least twice a week on non-consecutive days.

Flexibility

- Perform flexibility exercises at least two days each week for at least 10 minutes/day. Stretch and hold 15-30 seconds all major muscle groups (2-4x/stretch)

Balance

- Perform exercises that maintain or improve balance.

Key Guidelines for Children & Adolescents

Aerobic

- Do 60 minutes or more of physical activity daily, either in moderate- or vigorous-intensity aerobic activity.
- Vigorous-intensity activity should be included at least 3 days/week.

Muscle & Bone-Strengthening

- As part of their 60+ minutes of daily physical activity, adolescents should include muscle & bone-strengthening activities on at least 3 days/week.

Tips for meeting the guidelines

- **Try it in short bouts.** Moderate-intensity physical activity can be accumulated throughout the day in 10-minute bouts, which can be as effective as exercising for 30 minutes straight.
- **Mix it up.** Combinations of moderate- and vigorous-intensity physical activity can be used to meet the guidelines. For example, you can walk briskly for 30 minutes twice per week and jog at a higher intensity on two other days. Other ideas include bicycling, aerobic classes, and jumping rope.
- **Set/plan your schedule.** Set aside specific days and times for exercise making it a regular part of your daily schedule.
- **The gym isn't a necessity.** It doesn't take a gym membership to get the daily recommended amount of physical activity. A pair of comfortable shoes and a bit of motivation is all you need to live a more active, healthier life.
- **Build-up gradually.** Don't overwhelm yourself by setting unrealistic goals. If you are currently inactive, you may not be ready to meet the recommended guidelines. "Start low and go slow" by gradually increasing how often and how long activities are done.

These are ONLY the minimum recommendations:

- Increased aerobic activity will provide more extensive benefits, such as an even lower risk of heart disease or diabetes.
- To lose weight or maintain weight loss, 60-90 minutes of physical activity may be necessary.
- An increase in sets in muscle-strengthening activities will result in stronger muscles. Building muscle will increase the resting metabolic rate, which is what burns the calories at rest.

Type of Physical Activity	Age Group		
	Healthy Adults	Older Adults	Children/ Adolescents
Moderate-Intensity Aerobic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brisk walking (~3-4mph) • Water aerobics • Tennis (doubles) • Ballroom dancing • General gardening • Bicycling (< 10mph) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brisk walking • Water aerobics • Tennis (doubles) • Dancing • General gardening • Biking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rollerblading • Bicycle riding • Skateboarding • Baseball/Softball • Brisk Walking
Vigorous-Intensity Aerobic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racewalking, jogging • Lap swimming • Tennis (singles) • Jumping rope • Hiking • Heavy gardening • Bicycling (> 10mph) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jogging • Lap swimming • Tennis (singles) • Aerobic classes • Hiking • Heavy gardening • Bicycling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tag • Jumping rope • Running • Soccer, swimming, tennis
Muscle-Strengthening (major muscle groups: chest, shoulders, arms, back, abdomen, and legs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weight training • Resistance bands • Callisthenic exercises (Body Wt. provides resistance) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - push-ups, pull ups, sit-ups - carrying heavy loads • Yoga/ Pilates exercises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercises using exercise bands, machine weights, hand weights • Callisthenics (use of Body Wt.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ push-ups, pull ups, sit-ups ▪ Carrying heavy loads, digging, lifting • Carrying groceries • Tai Chi exercises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tug-of-war • Push-ups, sit-ups • Rope or tree climbing • Swinging on playground equipment
Bone-Strengthening	Weight bearing activities, such as walking or strength training, will help minimize the age-related decline of Bone Mineral Density.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hopscotch • Skipping • Gymnastics • Basketball
Balance exercises (helps decrease the chance of falls)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Backward/ sideways walking • Heel/toe walking • Standing from a sitting position • Single leg standing • Exercises can progress from holding onto support to performing them independently. 	
Flexibility Exercises (major joints: hip, back, shoulder, knee, upper torso, and neck)	Flexibility is an important part of every exercise program. As we age, our soft tissues around our joints become less extendible causing decreased mobility. Adequate levels of flexibility enhance functional capabilities (bending, twisting) and reduce the potential of injury.		

- **REMEMBER:** All aerobic activity counts!

