

Physical Activity

Physical activity, an active lifestyle and routine exercise, is the best way to stay healthy. An effective exercise program needs to be fun and keep you motivated. It helps to have a goal. Your goal might be to:

- Manage a health condition
- Reduce stress
- Improve your stamina
- Lose weight

Your exercise program can also be a good way for you to socialize. Taking exercise classes or exercising with a friend are both good ways to be social. You may have a hard time starting an exercise routine, but once you do start, you will begin to notice other benefits:

- Better control of your weight and appetite
- Improved fitness, making it easier to do everyday activities
- Improved sleep
- More confidence in yourself
- Lower risk for heart disease, diabetes, and high blood pressure

Calories used in exercise > calories eaten = weight loss.

This means that to lose weight, the number of calories you burn by exercising needs to be greater than the number of calories from the foods you eat and drink. Even if you work out a lot, if you eat more calories than you burn, you will gain weight.

Getting Started

You do not need to join a gym to exercise. If you have not exercised or been active in a long time, start slowly to prevent injuries. Taking a brisk 10-minute walk twice a week is a good start. Try joining a dance, yoga, or karate class if they appeal to you. You could also join a baseball or bowling team, or even a mall-walking group. The social aspects of these groups can be rewarding and motivating. The most important thing is to do exercises that you can maintain and enjoy.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Talk with your health care provider before starting an exercise program if:

- You have diabetes, heart disease, lung disease, or another long-term illness
- You are obese
- You have not been very active
- You get chest pains or shortness of breath when you are active

Build physical activity into your regular routine

Simple lifestyle changes can make a big difference over time.

- At work, try taking the stairs instead of the elevator, walking down the hall to talk with a co-worker instead of sending an e-mail, or adding a 10- to 20-minute walk during lunch.



Whether you walk or jog, it is important to exercise at 60-85% of your maximum heart rate if your goal is aerobic fitness

ADAM.



Exercise is an important part of preventive health care

ADAM.

- When you are running errands, try parking at the far end of the parking lot, or even down the street. Even better, walk to the store.
- At home, do chores such as vacuuming, washing the car, gardening, raking leaves, or shoveling snow.
- If you ride the bus, get off one stop before your usual stop and walk the rest of the way.

How much Exercise do you need?

Aim to exercise about 2.5 hours a week. Do moderate-intensity aerobic and muscle strengthening activities. Depending on your schedule, you could exercise for 30 minutes, 5 days a week or 45 to 60 minutes, 3 days a week. You do not have to do your total daily exercise all at once. If your goal is to exercise for 30 minutes, you can break that up into shorter time periods that adds up to 30 minutes. As you become fit, you can challenge yourself by increasing the intensity of your exercise by going from light to moderate activity. You can also increase the amount of time you exercise.

Sedentary behaviors are things you do while you are sitting still. Decreasing your sedentary behaviors can help you lose weight. For most people, the best way to decrease sedentary behavior is to reduce the time they spend watching TV and using a computer and other electronic devices. All of these activities are called "screen time."

Some ways to decrease the harm of too much screen time are:

- Choose 1 or 2 TV programs to watch, and turn off the TV when they are over.
- Do not keep the TV on all the time for background noise -- you might end up sitting down and watching it. Turn on the radio instead. You can be up doing things around the house and still listen to the radio.
- Do not eat while you are watching TV.
- Take the batteries out of your TV remote control and get up to change the channel.
- Before you turn on the TV, take your dog or a neighbor's dog for a walk. If you are going to miss your favorite show, record it.
- Find activities to replace TV-watching. Read a book, play a board game with family or friends, or take an evening cooking class.
- Work out on an exercise or yoga ball while you watch TV. You will burn calories. You can also set up a stationary bike or treadmill in front of your TV and use those while you watch.

