

Physical activity



We often hear about the benefits of physical activity, and it is arguably one of the most beneficial and impactful things you can do to improve your health. Physical activity includes any bodily movement that improves cardiovascular conditioning, muscle strength, and/or flexibility.

Health benefits of physical activity

- Better stress management
- Better weight management
- Elevated mood
- Greater flexibility and balance
- Improved glucose tolerance
- Improved memory and cognition
- Improved self-esteem
- Increased bone mass and muscle strength
- Increased HDL (healthy) cholesterol and reduced LDL (bad) cholesterol
- Reduced blood pressure and resting heart rate
- Reduced risk of chronic conditions (e.g., heart disease, diabetes, cancer)



6 tips for incorporating exercise into your daily life

Move often

Get up every hour if you work at a desk, go for a walk after dinner, or find an active hobby such as gardening or hiking.

Move early

If it works for your schedule, exercise first thing in the morning before other responsibilities or distractions interfere.

Schedule movement

Schedule exercising into your day as you would any other event. Add workouts to your calendar and set reminders for yourself.

Make movement enjoyable

Find activities you enjoy and experiment with different types of exercises until you find a few that you like.

Include family and friends

To stay motivated, involve friends, family members, or co-workers.

Be realistic

Set realistic, attainable goals for yourself. Start small and build upon your goals once you've reached them.

Types of physical activity

- **Aerobic activities:** brisk walking, jogging, dancing, swimming, tennis, cycling, ice skating
- **Balance training:** tai chi, yoga, pilates, using a stability ball or balance board
- **Bone-strengthening activities:** jumping jacks, jumping rope, weight lifting, skipping, running
- **Muscle-strengthening activities:** weight lifting, hiking, climbing stairs, resistance band exercises, body weight exercises (e.g., pushups, squats)



Physical activity guidelines

Population	Type of activity	Activity frequency	Activity duration (minimum)
Children 3 to 5	Active play (variety of activities)	Daily	Unlimited throughout the day
Children 6 to 17	Aerobic	Daily	60 minutes per day; aerobic activity should make up most of the 60 minutes
	Muscle-strengthening	3 or more days per week	
	Bone-strengthening	3 or more days per week	
Adults	Moderate intensity aerobic	Spread throughout the week	150 to 300 minutes per week
	Muscle-strengthening; involving all major muscle groups	2 or more days per week	
Older adults	A combination of: Balance training, aerobic activity, muscle-strengthening and bone-strengthening Intensity should be determined by individual level of fitness	Spread throughout the week	150 minutes per week

The information provided in this table is based on recommendations from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2nd edition. Please note that individual recommendations may vary depending on health status, life events (e.g., pregnancy), and health conditions.

References

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2018). Physical activity guidelines for Americans. https://health.gov/sites/default/files/2019-09/Physical_Activity_Guidelines_2nd_edition.pdf



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This handout was developed and medically reviewed by Fullscript's Integrative Medical Advisory team.
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