

## Healthy Steps for Moving More

The evidence is growing and is more convincing than ever! People of all ages who are generally inactive can improve their health and well-being by becoming active at a moderate-intensity on a regular basis.

Regular physical activity substantially reduces the risk of dying of coronary heart disease, the nation's leading cause of death, and decreases the risk for stroke, colon cancer, diabetes, and high blood pressure. It also helps to control weight; contributes to healthy bones, muscles, and joints; reduces falls among older adults; helps to relieve the pain of arthritis; reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression; and is associated with fewer hospitalizations, physician visits, and medications. Moreover, physical activity need not be strenuous to be beneficial; people of all ages benefit from participating in regular, moderate-intensity physical activity, such as 30 minutes of brisk walking five or more times a week.

Despite the proven benefits of physical activity, more than 60% of American adults do not get enough physical activity to provide health benefits. More than 25% are not active at all in their leisure time. Activity decreases with age and is less common among women than men and among those with lower income and less education. Furthermore, there are racial differences in physical activity rates particularly among women.

Insufficient physical activity is not limited to adults. More than a third of young people in grades 9–12 do not regularly engage in vigorous-intensity physical activity. Daily participation in high school physical education classes dropped from 42% in 1991 to 32% in 2001 (CDC, 2002).

Americans young and old should incorporate regular physical activity into their everyday lives. This does not necessarily mean joining an expensive gym or committing to a rigorous exercise or training routine. It is sufficient to choose activities that fit into your daily routine that speed your heart rate and breathing, or increase your strength and flexibility. Examples include walking to work, gardening, taking extra stairs, or mowing the lawn with a push mower. Besides building strength and aerobic fitness, regular exercise relieves stress, provides motivation, promotes relaxation, and facilitates sleep.

Regular physical activity is important throughout life. Healthy lifestyles are more influential than genetic factors in avoiding deterioration traditionally associated with aging. The growing number of older Americans places increasing demands on the public health system and on medical and social services. Currently, almost one-third of total U.S. health care expenditures are for older adults. These expenditures are largely due to treatment and care of chronic diseases, and the cost associated with many of these conditions could be reduced through regular physical activity.

## **Being Active ~ ANYWHERE !!**

Being physically active is much easier than you thought possible. There's no need to join an expensive health club or to spend hours doing exercises you hate. You don't even have to change your clothes!! Best of all, you can get fit **ANYWHERE – ANYTIME** of day!

### ***WHY make physical activity part of your day?***

- **ENJOY** the pleasure that comes from getting stronger and healthier.
- **BOOST** your brainpower and your energy levels – all day long.
- **IMPROVE** your strength and endurance (both physical and mental).
- **ENHANCE** your natural good looks from the inside out.
- **PROTECT** yourself from the pain of heart disease, cancer and osteoporosis.

### ***WHAT activities are the healthiest choices?***

For overall health, your best bet is to enjoy a wide variety of physical activities. Just follow the 30-10-5 rule: at least 30 minutes of physical activity a day; at least 10 minutes at a time; at least 5 days a week. For best results, give your body what it deserves:

- **Fun activities** ~ because they are the ones that you'll stick with!
- **Aerobic activities** ~ that get your heart pumping, like brisk walking or dancing
- **Body-shaping activities** ~ to maintain muscles, like lifting weights or groceries
- **Stretching activities** ~ for flexibility and tone, like water aerobics or gardening
- **Balance activities** ~ to strengthen bones and prevent falls, like yoga or bike riding

### ***HOW can I make activity part of every day?***

With a few simple guidelines, you can make physical activity an integral part of your day – even with a hectic schedule. Look for all the easy ways to fit fitness into your life:

- **Play more:** Feel like a kid again by skating, swinging, playing ball or flying a kite.
- **Use leg power:** Walk the dog; walk to the store; walk around the mall; just walk.
- **Hide the remote:** Change the channels the old-fashioned way – by getting up!
- **Practice inefficiency:** Make multiple trips on the stairs or to the car for groceries.
- **Pick up the pace:** Use a longer stride when you walk – everywhere, all the time.

## **The Seven C's of Successful Change: Taking charge of your health and your life**

Many of us want to make changes in our habits. Sometimes it's a New Year's resolution; sometimes it's advice from the doctor. Sometimes it's just a desire to be stronger or have more energy. We want to eat better and be more active, but we don't always know how to make the necessary changes. Taking some time to consider these seven "C's" of change may help you understand how to get from where you are now – to where you want to be.

### **1. Caring enough to treat your body really well.**

Caring about yourself is essential for making any behavior change. Self-care is not selfish – it is what we have to do in order to stop doing one thing and start doing another. Taking good care of yourself also helps you be in better shape to take care of those around you.

### **2. Choice to take small steps in a new direction.**

Change is all about making choices. It is making the choice to do one thing (like taking a walk) rather than another (like watching TV). It doesn't mean that you have to give up all television programs – it just means that sometimes you make the choice to be more active.

### **3. Creativity to find a variety of food and fitness options.**

The world is filled with stressful situations that can get in the way of our plans to eat well or to be active. The key is to stay calm and to brainstorm a variety of possible solutions. If you are out of fresh produce, you can still enjoy some canned fruit or frozen veggies.

### **4. Courage for new adventures and everyday challenges.**

There is no way around it. It takes courage to make a change. There are many ways to find the courage you need. You can discuss your struggles with friends or family; read inspiring stories about people who have made difficult changes; or find strength in faith and prayer.

### **5. Comfort through tough times with relaxation (or even pampering).**

Change is hard work and can be stressful – even when it is a positive change. When you are trying to do things differently, you need to rest and recharge your internal batteries. Take time to read a book, to take a nap, to play with the kids or just to do nothing for a while.

### **6. Confidence to take risks and to make normal mistakes.**

Optimistic people are generally healthier than pessimistic people. Being confident that you can make positive changes is at least half the battle. Sometimes it helps to make a list of all the changes you have already made – like eating more whole grains or drinking less soda.

### **7. Celebration of the progress toward a strong and healthy you.**

Rewards and celebrations are an important part of successful change (think about why we celebrate graduations or job promotions). Give yourself plenty of pats on the back – just for moving a step closer to your goal. Gold stars on the calendar aren't just for kids anymore!

An increase in physical activity is an important part of any weight management program. Most weight loss occurs because of decreased caloric intake. Sustained physical activity is most helpful in the prevention of weight regain. In addition, exercise has a benefit of reducing risks of cardiovascular disease and diabetes, beyond that produced by weight reduction alone. Start exercising slowly, and gradually increase the intensity. Trying too hard at first can lead to injury.

### **Examples of moderate amounts of physical activity**

#### **Common Chores**

#### **Sporting Activities**

Washing and waxing a car for 45-60 minutes	Playing volleyball for 45-60 minutes
Washing windows or floors for 45-60 minutes	Playing touch football for 45 minutes
Gardening for 30-45 minutes	Walking 1 3/4 miles in 35 minute (20min/mile)
Wheeling self in wheelchair 30-40 minutes	Basketball (shooting baskets) 30 minutes
Pushing a stroller 1 1/2 miles in 30 minutes	Bicycling 5 miles in 30 minutes
Raking leaves for 30 minutes	Dancing fast (social) for 30 minutes
Walking 2 miles in 30 minutes (15min/mile)	Water aerobics for 30 minutes
Stairwalking for 15 minutes	Swimming Laps for 20 minutes
	Basketball (playing game) for 15-20 minutes
	Bicycling 4 miles in 15 minutes
	Jumping rope for 15 minutes
	Running 1 1/2 miles in 15 min. (10min/mile)

Your exercise can be done all at one time, or intermittently over the day. Initial activities may be walking or swimming at a slow pace. You can start out by walking 30 minutes for three days a week and can build to 45 minutes of more intense walking, at least five days a week. With this regimen, you can burn 100 to 200 calories more per day. All adults should set a long-term goal to accumulate at least 30 minutes or more of moderate-intensity physical activity on most, and preferably all, days of the week. This regimen can be adapted to other forms of physical activity, but walking is particularly attractive because of its safety and accessibility. Also, try to increase "every day" activity such as taking the stairs instead of the elevator. Reducing sedentary time is a good strategy to increase activity by undertaking frequent, less strenuous activities. With time, you may be able to engage in more strenuous activities. Competitive sports, such as tennis and volleyball, can provide an enjoyable form of exercise for many, but care must be taken to avoid injury.

### **Activity Progression**

For the beginner, activity level can begin at very light and would include an increase in standing activities, special chores like room painting, pushing a wheelchair, yard work, ironing, cooking, and playing a musical instrument.

The next level would be light activity such as slow walking of 24 minutes/mile, garage work, carpentry, house cleaning, child care, golf, sailing, and recreational table tennis.

The next level would be moderate activity such as walking 15 minutes/mile, weeding and hoeing a garden, carrying a load, cycling, skiing, tennis, and dancing.

High activity would include walking 10 minutes/mile or walking with load uphill, tree felling, heavy manual digging, basketball, climbing, or soccer/kick ball.

You may also want to try:

- flexibility exercise to attain full range of joint motion
- strength or resistance exercise
- aerobic conditioning

### **Tips for People Who Have Been Inactive for a While**

Use a sensible approach by starting out slowly.

- Begin by choosing moderate-intensity activities you enjoy the most. By choosing activities you enjoy, you'll be more likely to stick with them.
- Gradually build up the time spent doing the activity by adding a few minutes every few days or so until you can comfortably perform a minimum recommended amount of activity (30 minutes per day).
- As the minimum amount becomes easier, gradually increase either the length of time performing an activity or increase the intensity of the activity, or both.
- Vary your activities, both for interest and to broaden the range of benefits.
- Explore new physical activities.
- Reward and acknowledge your efforts.

**There are 1440 minutes in every day... Schedule 30 of them for physical activity.**

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