

GUIDELINES FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROMOTES HEALTH.

Physical activity and nutrition work together to promote health. Being physically active not only helps maintain a healthy body weight, but also reduces risks of cardiovascular disease, hypertension and diabetes.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.

Recommendations for physical activity include obtaining at least 30 minutes of moderate activity every day. The 30 minutes can be accumulated throughout the day, such as two 15-minute walks. Daily physical activity makes it easier to lose and maintain weight. However, 30 minutes of activity per day, may not be enough to lose weight, depending on your weight goals.

INCLUDING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY INTO YOUR DAILY ROUTINE.

Making physical activity part of your daily routine is easier than you may think. Some examples include: taking the stairs instead of the elevator, walking for 10 minutes during your lunch break, lifting free weights while watching TV, or raking leaves. Types of physical activity that are beneficial to our heart include not only aerobic activities (such as walking or biking), but also ones that help increase strength and flexibility (like lifting weights, dance and yoga).

It is also important to pick an activity you enjoy. This will make physical activity easier to maintain over the long run. Remember--no one is ever too young or too old to reap the benefits of physical activity.

EXAMPLES OF MODERATE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR ADULTS.

Common Chores

Washing windows for 45-60 minutes
Gardening for 30-45 minutes
Raking leaves for 30 minutes
Stairwalking for 15 minutes
Pushing a stroller 1 1/2 miles in 30 minutes

Sports

Walking 1 3/4 miles in 35 minutes
Bicycling 5 miles in 30 minutes
Swimming laps for 20 minutes
Jumping rope for 15 minutes
Dancing for 30 minutes

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HEALTH BENEFITS OF REGULAR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.

Helps maintain muscle mass, healthy bones and joints
Promotes self-esteem and well being
Improves cardiovascular fitness
Reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression

Helps control blood pressure and blood sugar levels
Helps with weight reduction and management
Helps improve flexibility and strength

WARNING SIGNALS.

While physical activity has many benefits, some activities may worsen existing heart problems. Warning signals include: sudden dizziness, cold sweats, paleness, fainting, pain, or pressure in the upper body after starting a physical activity.

If you notice any of these signals contact your healthcare provider immediately.

You should always check with your doctor before starting a vigorous activity plan, especially if you are currently under the care of a physician for chronic health problems such as heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, osteoporosis, or obesity.

SOMETHING IS BETTER THAN NOTHING.

People who are usually inactive can achieve health benefits by becoming even moderately active on a regular basis. However, greater health gains can be made by increasing the amount (frequency, intensity or time) of physical activity.

Source: www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health