

## How to Begin Exercising

Exercise has numerous benefits including lowering blood pressure, reducing cholesterol, helping to control diabetes, reducing stress and making us feel more rested and energetic. Exercise comes in many forms, and it is not difficult to get started. Everyone starts somewhere; the main key is to keep putting one foot in front of the other.

### What should I do?

- Look for opportunities to reduce sedentary time and increase active time. For example, instead of watching TV, try taking a walk after dinner.
- Set aside specific times for physical activity in your schedule to make it part of your daily or weekly routine.
- Start with activities, locations and times you enjoy. For example, some people might like walking around the neighborhood in the mornings; others might prefer an exercise class at a health club after work.
- Try activities with friends or family members to help with motivation and mutual encouragement.
- Start slowly and work your way up to more physically challenging activities. Walking is a great place to begin.
- When necessary, break up your daily activity goal into smaller amounts of time. For example, you could break the 30-minute-a-day recommendation into three 10-minute sessions or two 15-minute sessions. Just make sure the shorter sessions are at least 10 minutes long.

### How long should I be active?

It has been shown that adults ages 18 to 64 years old need 2 hours and 30 minutes (150 minutes) of moderate-intensity physical activity per week. This equates to approximately 30 minutes of exercise 5 days per week. Remember, physical activity can be broken up as well. You could split the 30 minutes into two separate 15-minute activities on the same day or other various ways as long as within the week you have reached 150 minutes.

### What type of physical activity is considered moderate-intensity?

Moderate-intensity aerobic activity means you're working hard enough to raise your heart rate and break a sweat. One way to tell is that you'll be able to talk, but not sing the words to your favorite song. Here are some examples of activities that require moderate effort:

- Walking fast
- Water aerobics
- Riding a bike on level ground or with few hills
- Playing tennis
- Pushing a lawnmower

## Ways to Keep Motivated

- Set short and long-term goals. Make goals that are realistic and specific. “I will walk every day” may be too ambiguous. “I will walk 15 minutes after lunch” is more specific and achievable.
- Schedule your exercise in your daily planner or to-do list and make it a priority, as you would if you were scheduling an appointment or meeting a friend for coffee.
- Find an exercise buddy to help keep you accountable. Making exercise a social activity will also make it more enjoyable.
- Maintain an exercise journal or log. Use a calendar to track how much and how often you exercise. It will help you see how far you have come and how close you are to achieving your goals.
- Participate in a local fundraising event that involves exercise (i.e. 5K walk or run). It will help the community and your health.
- Join a local biking or walking club. You will get fit and make friends that will help support you in your goals.
- Keep a workout bag or walking shoes in your office or car. You never know when you may have 30 – 60 minutes to walk at the park or beach.
- Reward yourself for your exercise. Treat yourself to a warm bubble bath or massage after a great workout.
- Focus on the benefits of exercise; having more energy, becoming stronger, relieving stress and strengthening your heart.
- Finally, write down any positives after exercise such as being more focused, having a sense of well-being, being more relaxed, etc. In those moments you are not feeling motivated, you have something to inspire you.

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