Physical Activity – It’s Essential!

Taking part in physical activity on a regular basis is an essential part of a healthy lifestyle. Being active offers health and wellness benefits for everyone, regardless of age.

Be active on a regular basis to ...

**Increase your chances of:**
- Living longer
- Feeling better
- Sleeping well
- Moving around more easily
- Building stronger muscles and bones
- Being at a healthy weight

**Decrease your chances of:**
- Getting heart disease
- Getting type 2 diabetes
- Having high blood pressure
- Having high blood cholesterol
- Having a stroke
- Becoming depressed

Use the information below to find out how much physical activity you need. Activity must be of moderate or vigorous intensity (see back for details) in order to count toward your daily total. People with health conditions or disabilities should consult a healthcare professional before beginning any new activity.

**YOUNG CHILDREN** (ages 2 - 5)
There are no specific recommendations for the number of minutes young children should be active; however, young children should engage in active play several times a day.

**ADULTS** (ages 18 - 64)
**Follow the 30:5 rule**
At least 30 minutes a day 5 days a week.

**OLDER ADULTS** (ages 65 and older)
Older adults should follow the adult activity guidelines, to the extent that they are able.

**CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS** (ages 6 - 17)
**Follow the 60:5 rule**
At least 60 minutes a day 5 days a week.
Deciding What Activity is Right for You

Moderate-intensity aerobic activity means you're working hard enough to raise your heart rate and break a sweat. One way to tell if you're working at a moderate intensity is if you can still talk but cannot sing the words to a song.

Some examples of moderate aerobic activity:

- Walking at a brisk pace (3-4.5 mph)
- Dancing
- Riding a bike less than 10 mph
- Raking leaves
- Playing catch
- Yoga
- Doubles tennis
- Ice skating

Vigorous-intensity aerobic activity means you're breathing hard and fast, and your heart rate has gone up a great deal. If you're working at this level, you won't be able to say more than a few words without taking a breath.

Some examples of vigorous aerobic activity:

- Walking, jogging, or running at a fast pace (5+ mph)
- Dancing energetically
- Riding a bike faster than 10 mph
- Shoveling heavy snow
- Soccer, kickball, basketball
- Jumping rope, jumping jacks
- Singles tennis
- Speed skating

Follow these steps to help you stay on the road to fitness

Make physical fitness part of every day by choosing activities you can do regularly and enjoy. Get moving for at least 10 minutes at a time for health benefits.

Be active at home by joining a walking group with friends or neighbors, exercising to a video, playing with your kids, or gardening. Get the whole family involved!

Be active at work by taking a brisk walk during a break, doing some simple stretches, or joining in company activities. Take the stairs!

Be active at play by dancing away those rainy days with the kids, playing catch, walking to the playground, or going for a bike ride.