



# *Spring* INTO ACTION

Workplace Wellness Challenge

Week 6 – Physical Activity & You!



# Spring

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### Physical Activity & You!

Regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health. It can help:

#### *Control your weight*

Looking to get to or maintain a healthy weight? Diet and physical activity play a critical role. You gain weight when the calories you burn, including those burned during physical activity, are less than the calories you eat and drink. People vary greatly in how much physical activity they need. You may need to be more active than others to achieve or maintain a healthy weight.

#### *To maintain your weight*

Get 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity, 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity, or an equivalent mix of the two each week. Strong scientific evidence shows that physical activity helps you maintain your weight. However, the exact amount of physical activity needed varies from person to person. You may need more than the equivalent of 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity a week to maintain your weight.

#### *To lose weight and keep it off*

Getting to and staying at a healthy weight requires both regular physical activity and a healthy eating plan. The CDC has some great tools and information about nutrition, physical activity and weight loss.

#### *Reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease*

Heart disease and stroke are two of the leading causes of death in the United States. But getting at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity can reduce your risk for these diseases. You can reduce your risk even further with more physical activity. Regular physical activity can also lower your blood pressure and improve your cholesterol levels.

#### *Reduce your risk of type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome*

Regular physical activity can reduce your risk of developing type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome. Metabolic syndrome is a condition in which you have some combination of too much fat around the waist, high blood pressure, low HDL cholesterol, high triglycerides or high blood sugar. Research shows that people who get 120 to 150 minutes a week of at least moderate-intensity aerobic activity have lower rates of these conditions. The more physical activity you do, the lower your risk will be.





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#### *Reduce your risk of some cancers*

Being physically active lowers your risk for two types of cancer. Research shows that:

1. Physically active people have a lower risk of colon cancer than people who are not active.
2. Physically active women have a lower risk of breast cancer than women who are not active.

**Reduce your risk of endometrial and lung cancer.** Although the research is not yet final, some findings suggest that your risk of endometrial cancer and lung cancer may be lower if you get regular physical activity.

**Improve your quality of life.** If you are a cancer survivor, research shows that regular physical activity not only gives you a better quality of life, but also improves your physical fitness.

#### *Strengthen your bones and muscles*

As you age, it's important to protect your bones, joints and muscles. Not only do they support your body and help you move, but keeping them healthy can help ensure that you're able to do your daily activities. Research shows that doing at least moderate-intensity aerobic, muscle-strengthening and bone-strengthening physical activity can slow the loss of bone density that comes with age.

**Hip fracture** is a serious health condition that can have life-changing effects for older adults. But research shows that people who do 120 to 300 minutes of at least moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week have a lower risk of hip fracture.

**Regular physical activity helps with arthritis and other joint conditions.** If you have arthritis, research shows that 130 to 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity, low-impact aerobic activity can improve your ability to manage pain and do everyday tasks, as well as your quality of life.

**Build strong, healthy muscles.** Muscle-strengthening activities help increase or maintain your muscle mass and strength. Slowly increasing the amount of weight and number of repetitions you do will give you even more benefits, no matter your age.



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#### *Improve your mental health and mood, and increase energy*

Regular physical activity can help keep your thinking, learning and judgment skills sharp. It can also reduce your risk of depression and may help you sleep better. Research has shown that doing aerobic or a mix of aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities three to five times a week for 30 to 60 minutes can give you these benefits. Physical activity stimulates brain chemicals that may leave you feeling happier and more relaxed.

You may also feel better about your appearance and yourself when you exercise regularly. Regular physical activity may boost your energy. Exercise delivers oxygen and nutrients to your tissues and helps your cardiovascular system work more efficiently.

#### *Improve your ability to do daily activities and prevent falls*

If you're a physically active middle-aged or older adult, you have a lower risk of functional limitations than people who are inactive. A functional limitation is a loss of the ability to do everyday activities such as climbing stairs, going shopping, or playing with your grandchildren.

**Already have trouble doing some of your everyday activities?** Aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities can help improve your ability to do these types of tasks.

**Are you an older adult who is at risk for falls?** Research shows that doing balance and muscle-strengthening activities each week along with moderate-intensity aerobic activity, like brisk walking, can help reduce your risk of falling.

#### *Increase your chances of living longer*

Science shows that physical activity can reduce your risk of dying early from conditions like heart disease and some cancers. This is remarkable in two ways:

1. Only a few lifestyle choices have as large an impact on your health as physical activity. People who are physically active for about seven hours a week have a 40 percent lower risk of dying early than those who are active for less than 30 minutes a week.
2. You don't have to do high amounts of activity or vigorous-intensity activity to reduce your risk of premature death. You can put yourself at lower risk by doing at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity.

Everyone can gain the health benefits of physical activity - *age, ethnicity, shape and size do not matter.*



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Workplace Wellness

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2011, Feb.16). *Physical Activity and Health*. Retrieved May 8, 2012, from: <http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/health/>