

2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans

Be Active Your Way: A Fact Sheet for Adults



Finding out what kind and how much physical activity you need

How do I do it?

It's your choice. Pick an activity that's easy to fit into your life. Do at least 10 minutes of physical activity at a time. Choose **aerobic** activities that work for you. These make your heart beat faster and can make your heart, lungs, and blood vessels stronger and more fit. Also, do **strengthening** activities which make your muscles do more work than usual.

Why should I be physically active?

Physical activity can make you feel stronger and more alive. It is a fun way to be with your family or friends. It also helps you improve your health.

How many times a week should I be physically active?

It is up to you, but it is better to spread your activity throughout the week and to be active at least 3 days a week.

How do I build up more physical activity?

Do a little more each time. Once you feel comfortable, do it more often. Then you can trade activities at a moderate level for vigorous ones that take more effort. You can do moderate and vigorous activities in the same week.

How much physical activity do I need to do?

This chart tells you about the activities that are important for you to do. Do **both** aerobic activities and strengthening activities. Each offers important health benefits. And remember, some physical activity is better than none!

Aerobic Activities

If you choose activities at a **moderate** level, do at least **2 hours and 30 minutes** a week.

If you choose **vigorous** activities, do at least **1 hour and 15 minutes** a week.

- Slowly build up the amount of time you do physical activities. The more time you spend, the more health benefits you gain. Aim for twice the amount of activity in the box above.
- Do at least 10 minutes at a time.
- You can combine moderate and vigorous activities.

Muscle Strengthening Activities

Do these at least **2 days** a week.

- Include all the major muscle groups such as legs, hips, back, chest, stomach, shoulders, and arms.
- Exercises for each muscle group should be repeated 8 to 12 times per session.

Be Active, Healthy, and Happy!



How can I tell an activity at a moderate level from a vigorous one?

Vigorous activities take more effort than moderate ones. Here are just a few moderate and vigorous aerobic physical activities. Do these for **10 minutes or more** at a time.

Moderate Activities

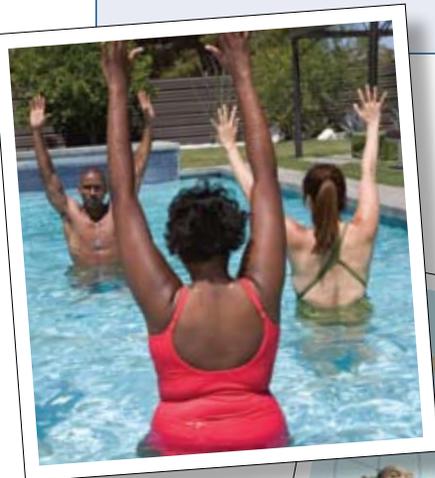
(I can talk while I do them, but I can't sing.)

- Ballroom and line dancing
- Biking on level ground or with few hills
- Canoeing
- General gardening (raking, trimming shrubs)
- Sports where you catch and throw (baseball, softball, volleyball)
- Tennis (doubles)
- Using your manual wheelchair
- Using hand cyclers—also called ergometers
- Walking briskly
- Water aerobics

Vigorous Activities

(I can only say a few words without stopping to catch my breath.)

- Aerobic dance
- Biking faster than 10 miles per hour
- Fast dancing
- Heavy gardening (digging, hoeing)
- Hiking uphill
- Jumping rope
- Martial arts (such as karate)
- Race walking, jogging, or running
- Sports with a lot of running (basketball, hockey, soccer)
- Swimming fast or swimming laps
- Tennis (singles)



For more information, visit www.healthfinder.gov and type activity in the search box.

Be active your way by choosing activities you enjoy!