

Aerobic Fitness

GUIDELINES

How much activity do I need to do?

Any activity is better than none! The more you do, the greater the health advantages. Here are physical activity guidelines based on your preferences:

Aerobic Activity

If you choose to be active at a moderate level – a good place for most people to begin – aim for at least 2 hours and 30 minutes weekly. Divide this over 5 or more exercise days each week. For example, walk 30 minutes, 5 days per week.

Moderate Activities

- Active gardening (raking, mowing)
- Ball room and line dancing
- Biking on level ground, few hills
- Canoeing
- Golf
- Tennis doubles
- Sports such as baseball, softball, and volleyball
- Swimming at a moderate pace
- Using a manual wheelchair
- Using hand cyclers or ergometers
- Walking briskly
- Water aerobics

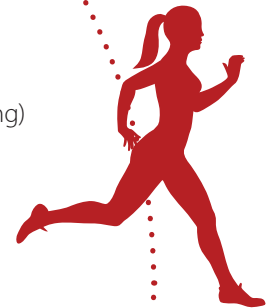


Intensity is moderate, requiring you to breathe deeply but not be out of breath. You should be able to carry on a conversation while exercising.

If you choose vigorous activity, aim for at least 1 hour and 15 minutes a week. Divide this over 3 or more exercise days weekly. For example, you may want to bike or jog for 20-30 minutes, 3-4 days per week.

Vigorous Activities

- Aerobic dance to music
- Biking 12+ mph or hills
- Fast dancing
- Heavy gardening (digging, hoeing)
- Hiking uphill
- Jumping rope
- Climbing stairs
- Martial arts such as karate
- Race walking, jogging, or running
- Sports with lots of running (basketball, hockey, soccer)
- Swimming fast or laps
- Tennis singles



Intensity is higher. You will breathe more deeply and can say only a few words before breathing again, but not be breathless.

Progression

Progress gradually and slowly to avoid injury.

Slowly build up the amount of time you do physical activities. Start with a time you can easily complete without undue strain even if it is only 5-10 minutes at a time. Gradually, over weeks, build up to the amount of activity time listed above.

Do at least 10 minutes of activity at a time. It's OK to have two or more 10- to 15-minute sessions daily if this fits into your schedule. You don't have to do the whole 20-60 minutes at one time.

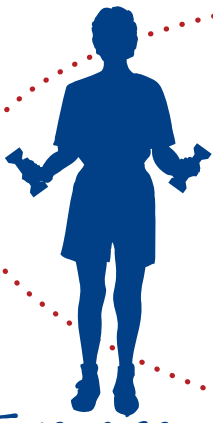


As you get used to physical activity, you can mix both moderate and vigorous activities. For example, you could walk 3 days a week and jog 2 days a week.

Going a little longer and at a more vigorous rate will give you further fitness and health advantages.

If you don't want to do vigorous activities, simply increase your time doing moderate activities if you wish to see further increases in fitness and health benefits. Aim for 45-60 minutes on some days each week.

More →



Muscle Strengthening Activities

Do strengthening exercises at least 2 days per week; up to 4 times per week for greater strength.

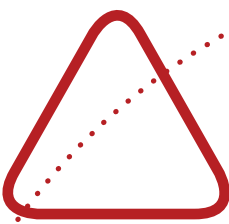
Choose strengthening exercises for all major muscle groups, such as the legs, hips, back, chest, stomach, shoulders, and arms

Exercises for each muscle group should be repeated 8-12 times per session. Gradually increase the weights or resistance to challenge your muscles to grow stronger. Ask a trainer to show you appropriate strengthening exercises if this is new for you. When using weights, always train with a buddy for safety. For greater strength gains work up to 2 or 3 sets of each exercise.

Exercise goals & logging

Set weekly exercise goals. It can be minutes of activity per week or Aerobic Miles. (See the chart on the right for Aerobic Miles.) Or, if you are wearing a pedometer, you may want to shoot for 7,000, 8,000, or 10,000 steps a day. Write down what you accomplished every day. Total weekly records to see if your met your goals. Research shows that people who set goals and log their activity daily are more likely to keep up their exercise program than those who don't. Here are some examples of goals:

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| FIRST STARTING | 15-30 minutes of exercise/ 3-4 days per week (4-8 aerobic miles/week) |
| PROGRESSING | 30-40 minutes of activity/ 4-5 days per week (8-12 aerobic miles/week) |
| HIGH FITNESS | 45-60 minutes of moderate activity or 30-45 minutes of vigorous activity/ 5 days per week (15-20 aerobic miles per week) |



Safety

If you have any health problems or you are planning a vigorous exercise program and are 40 or older for men, or 50 or older for women, you should check with your doctor before starting an exercise program and get specific guidance. Avoid overexertion (getting out of breath). Wear good exercise shoes and clothing appropriate for the weather. Exercise in safe areas – well-lighted, not isolated, and with an exercise buddy when possible. Limit activity in hot weather – exercise in the cool of the morning or evening. Drink plenty of fluids, especially on warm days.

Lifestyle activity

- Build activity into your daily routine.
- Play actively with your kids.
- Walk whenever you can – to the store, to the bus or train, and up the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator.
- Reduce long periods of inactivity, such as watching TV or sitting at a desk without a break. Sitting too much is a health hazard. Get up from your desk or the couch and walk around at least every hour.
- Find out about walking and cycling paths in your neighborhood.
- Mow your own lawn. Work in your garden. Enjoy the out-of-doors.
- Take a hike or bike ride on the weekend. Look for active ways to spend your days off.
- Bike or walk to work when the weather permits and if you live close by.
- Try a new activity or fitness class or observe others to see if it is something you'd like to try.

| BENEFITS OF REGULAR ACTIVITY | HEALTH RISKS OF INACTIVITY |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Better health | Early death |
| Improved fitness | Heart disease |
| Better posture and balance | Obesity |
| Relaxation and reduced stress | High blood pressure |
| A healthier weight | Adult onset diabetes |
| Stronger muscles and bones | Stroke |
| Feeling more energetic | Colon or breast cancer |
| Improved self-esteem | Depression |
| Independent living in later life | Osteoporosis and muscles wasting with age |

Sources: 1. *Be Active Your Way: Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, HealthierUS.Gov*
2. *Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living, Public Health Agency for Canada*

