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Guide to Physical Activity

Physical activity is an important part of your weight management program. Most weight loss occurs because of decreased calorie intake. Sustained physical activity is most helpful in the prevention of weight regain. In addition, exercise has a benefit of reducing risks of cardiovascular disease and diabetes, beyond that produced by weight reduction alone. Start exercising slowly, and gradually increase the intensity. Trying too hard at first can lead to injury.

Examples of moderate-intensity amounts of physical activity

Common Chores

- Washing and waxing a car for 45–60 minutes
- Washing windows or floors for 45–60 minutes
- Gardening for 30–45 minutes
- Wheeling self in wheelchair for 30–40 minutes
- Pushing a stroller 1.5 miles in 30 minutes
- Raking leaves for 30 minutes
- Walking 2 miles in 30 minutes (15 min/mile)
- Shoveling snow for 15 minutes
- Stairwalking for 15 minutes

Sporting Activities

- Playing volleyball for 45–60 minutes
- Playing touch football for 45 minutes
- Walking 1.75 miles in 35 minutes (20 min/mile)
- Basketball (shooting baskets) for 30 minutes
- Bicycling 5 miles in 30 minutes
- Dancing fast (social) for 30 minutes
- Water aerobics for 30 minutes
- Swimming laps for 20 minutes
- Basketball (playing game) for 15–20 minutes
- Bicycling 4 miles in 15 minutes
- Jumping rope for 15 minutes
- Running 1.5 miles in 15 minutes (10 min/mile)

Your exercise can be done all at one time, or intermittently throughout the day. Activities to get you started could include walking or swimming at a slow pace. You can start out by walking 30 minutes for 3 days a week and build to 45 minutes of more intense walking, at least 5 days a week. With this plan, you can burn 100 to 200 calories more per day. All adults should set a long-term goal to accumulate at least 30 minutes or more of moderate-intensity physical activity on most, and preferably all, days of the week. This regimen can be adapted to other forms of physical activity, but walking is particularly

Healthy Weight Tip

Doing physical activities that you enjoy will help you get fit and lose weight. Join a dance class or kick up your heels with a friend or family. Or take brisk walks with your dog.

Activity Progression Samples

Beginners: standing activities, ironing, cooking, playing a musical instrument, etc.

Light: slow walking, garage work, house cleaning, childcare, etc.

Moderate intensity: faster walking, weeding the garden, cycling, tennis, etc.

High intensity: walking fast with a load uphill, basketball, climbing, soccer, etc.

You also may want to try:

Flexibility exercises to attain full range of joint motion

Strength or resistance exercises

Aerobic conditioning

attractive because of its safety and accessibility. Also, try to increase "everyday" activity such as by taking the stairs instead of the elevator. Reducing sedentary time is a good strategy to increase activity by undertaking frequent, less strenuous activities. With time, you may be able to engage in more strenuous activities. Competitive sports, such as tennis and volleyball, can provide an enjoyable form of exercise for many, but care must be taken to avoid injury.

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