Physical Activity Guidelines for Healthy Adults

Choosing an activity and deciding how much time to spend exercising can be confusing. You will find simple guidelines to exercise outlined below. These guidelines are for healthy adults that have been approved to exercise by their doctor. Before you start a new exercise program, talk to your doctor about the types and amounts of exercise that are right for you.

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

• Control your weight
• Reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease
• Reduce your risk for type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome
• Reduce your risk of some cancers
• Strengthen your bones and muscles
• Improve your mental health and mood
• Improve your ability to do daily activities and prevent falls, if you are an older adult
• Increase your chances of living longer

For important health benefits, adults need at least:

• 150 minutes a week of moderate exercise, like brisk walking AND strength training on 2 or more days a week that work all major muscle groups
  OR
• 75 minutes a week of vigorous exercise, like jogging or running AND strength training on 2 or more days a week that work all major muscle groups
  OR
• A mix of moderate and vigorous exercise AND muscle-strengthening activities on 2 or more days a week that work all major muscle groups

Note: All major muscle groups include legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms.

A little at a time is fine
We know 150 minutes each week sounds like a lot of time, but you do not have to do it all at once. It is best to spread your activity out during the week. You can break it up into smaller chunks of time during the day as long as you are doing your activity at a moderate or vigorous effort.

Try it!
Try going for a 10-minute brisk walk, 3 times a day, 5 days a week. This will give you a total of 150 minutes of moderate aerobic exercise.
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For even greater health benefits adults should increase their activity to:

• 300 minutes a week of moderate aerobic exercise AND strength training on 2 or more days a week that work all major muscle groups
  OR
• 150 minutes a week of vigorous aerobic exercise AND strength training on 2 or more days a week that work all major muscle groups
  OR
• A mix of moderate and vigorous exercise AND strength training on 2 or more days a week that work all major muscle groups

Note: All major muscle groups include legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms.

Source: Adapted from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Princeton University provides FREE Health Coaching to benefits-eligible employees and dependents.

Call 866-237-0973 to schedule a free, confidential appointment.