

GUIDELINES FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR ADULTS 2008

(Adapted by Dr. Mark Sockell from [2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans](#))

Key Guidelines for Adults

- All adults should avoid inactivity. Some physical activity is better than none, and adults who participate in any amount of physical activity gain some health benefits.
- For substantial health benefits, adults should do at least 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) a week of moderate-intensity, or 75 minutes (1 hour and 15 minutes) a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity, or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic activity. Aerobic activity should be performed in episodes of at least 10 minutes, and preferably, it should be spread throughout the week.
- For additional and more extensive health benefits, adults should increase their aerobic physical activity to 300 minutes (5 hours) a week of moderate-intensity, or 150 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity, or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity activity. Additional health benefits are gained by engaging in physical activity beyond this amount.
- Adults should also do muscle-strengthening activities that are moderate or high intensity and involve all major muscle groups on 2 or more days a week, as these activities provide additional health benefits.

Moderate Intensity

- Walking briskly (3 miles per hour or faster, but not race-walking)
- Water aerobics
- Bicycling slower than 10 miles per hour
- Tennis (doubles)
- Ballroom dancing
- General gardening

Vigorous Intensity

- Racewalking, jogging, or running
- Swimming laps
- Tennis (singles)
- Aerobic dancing
- Bicycling 10 miles per hour or faster
- Jumping rope
- Heavy gardening (continuous digging or hoeing, with heart rate increases)
- Hiking uphill or with a heavy backpack

As a rule of thumb, 1 minute of vigorous = 2 minutes of moderate exercise.

On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is inactive and 10 is maximally active, moderate intensity is rated a 5-6, and vigorous activity is rated a 7-8.

The table gives some examples.

Remember:

- **Some is better than none**
- **Find exercise you enjoy**
- **Set achievable goals for yourself!**

EXERCISE IN OLDER ADULTS

Aerobic	Muscle-Strengthening
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking • Dancing • Swimming • Water aerobics • Jogging • Aerobic exercise classes • Bicycle riding (stationary or on a path) • Some activities of gardening, such as raking and pushing a lawn mower • Tennis • Golf (without a cart) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercises using exercise bands, weight machines, hand-held weights • Calisthenic exercises (body weight provides resistance to movement) • Digging, lifting, and carrying as part of gardening • Carrying groceries • Some yoga exercises • Some tai chi exercises

The same guidelines apply for older adults: 150 minutes of moderate or 75 minutes of strenuous exercise per week, tailored to the fitness and medical condition of the individual.

Often limiting the exercise to 10 minutes increments, several times per day, will minimize muscle and joint strain and fatigue. Muscle strengthening exercises are important for minimizing the effects of osteoporosis and arthritis.

PROVEN HEALTH BENEFITS OF EXERCISE

Adults and Older Adults
<p>Strong evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower risk of early death • Lower risk of coronary heart disease • Lower risk of stroke • Lower risk of high blood pressure • Lower risk of adverse blood lipid profile • Lower risk of type 2 diabetes • Lower risk of metabolic syndrome • Lower risk of colon cancer • Lower risk of breast cancer • Prevention of weight gain • Weight loss, particularly when combined with reduced calorie intake • Improved cardiorespiratory and muscular fitness • Prevention of falls • Reduced depression • Better cognitive function (for older adults)

Adults and Older Adults
<p>Moderate to strong evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better functional health (for older adults) • Reduced abdominal obesity <p>Moderate evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower risk of hip fracture • Lower risk of lung cancer • Lower risk of endometrial cancer • Weight maintenance after weight loss • Increased bone density • Improved sleep quality

Children and Adolescents
<p>Strong evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved cardiorespiratory and muscular fitness • Improved bone health • Improved cardiovascular and metabolic health biomarkers • Favorable body composition <p>Moderate evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced symptoms of depression