

Staying fit through physical activity



Be active for a healthy body

You don't need to join a gym to be more active. Take walks. Climb stairs instead of taking the elevator. Enjoy more active hobbies, like gardening or taking a dance class.

Make a goal to get atleast **30 minutes** of activity, 5 days per week. If you can't do it all at once spread it out over the day.

10 minutes — 10 minutes — 10 minutes



Tips for starting new activities

It can be easy to overdo an exercise or activity. This is especially true if you haven't been active for a while. Use these tips to help prevent injuries. They can help you stay on track for your health goals.



Warm up
Start your physical activity with 5 minutes of low-level activity.

Use the right equipment
Wear a helmet for biking and athletic shoes for walking.

Increase flexibility
Stretch during your warm up and cool down.

Drink water
Drink plenty of water before, during, and after exercise.

Build up slowly
Start where you are comfortable and increase activity over time.

Cool down
End a longer bout of activity by doing a slower activity for 5-10 minutes.

What is keeping you from being more active?

Are you worried about getting hurt, being bored, or not having enough time? The ideas below may help you get moving and keep at it.



Believe it or not, you have the time

You can get activity into your day no matter how busy you are. Here are some ways you can make fitness a way of life:

- ☐ Stretch for 10 minutes when you wake up.
- ☐ Plan active outings, such as a walk at a forest preserve or birdwatching or taking the family to the zoo.
- ☐ Walk during your lunch break.

Any activity is a good start

The goal is to move your body more. How you get there is really up to you. Try these ideas:

- ☐ Do your regular activities longer, faster, or more often, such as walking the dog or gardening.
- ☐ Set a specific short-term goal, like walking three times a week.
- ☐ Increase your daily steps, for example by parking farther away from store entrance

Starting slowly is perfectly OK

You don't need to even break a sweat as you begin. Here are some ideas to get you going:

- ☐ Start with short walks around where you live or work.
- ☐ Join a social group where physical activity is the focus.
- ☐ Take the stairs up one flight, if able.
- ☐ For parents or grandparents, play an active game or dance to a favorite song with your children or grandchildren

You can make fitness fun

If you get bored doing the same things, try these tips to keep yourself motivated:

- ☐ Learn new skills by trying a new fitness class or dance class or new sport.
- ☐ Tie hobbies to your activity, such as photography and walking.
- ☐ Switch activities. For example, you can walk on Monday and ride a bike on Tuesday.

Being active is good for your mind, too

Regular exercise may help to improve your well-being. It may help you sleep better and feel more rested. With regular exercise, you may feel better about yourself.



Other ways of being active may improve your health by:

- **Lowering** your risk of heart disease and certain cancers
- **Strengthening** your muscles and defending against muscle loss
- **Managing** your weight when combined with healthy eating
- **Improving** your mood
- **Helping** you sleep better

If you have a disability, visit **www.nchpad.org**—The National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability (NCHPAD)—for information.



Before you begin any new physical activity:

- ☐ **Discuss** it with your healthcare provider
- ☐ **Set** some goals you can achieve
- ☐ **Choose** activities you enjoy
- ☐ **Schedule** time for physical activity
- ☐ **Ask** friends and family for support



Finding the joy in being more physically active

Experience the benefits of being physically active. Think of it as your time. Remind yourself that you are helping your body and mind improve. Also, pay attention to how you feel after you've been active. Chances are you may feel stronger, have more energy, and be healthier.

What ideas do you have to get 30 minutes of physical activity every day?

Park your vehicle farther away from the entrance when shopping.

Build in flexibility exercises after sitting for one hour.

Take the stairs instead of the elevator.

Carry your groceries from the supermarket.



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