



# Staying fit through exercise



# 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 recreation, like gardening or taking a dance class.

Make a goal to get **30 minutes** of activity each day. Spread it out over the whole day.



## 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 workouts with 5 minutes of low-level activity.



### Use the right equipment

Wear a helmet for biking and athletic shoes for walking.



### Increase flexibility

Stretch after you warm up and during your 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 your workout 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 hiking or taking the family to the zoo.
- Walk during your lunch break.



## 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.



## 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.



## 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 exercise 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 outlook. It may help you sleep better and feel more rested. With regular exercise, you may feel better about yourself.

## Other ways being active may improve your health is by:

- **Lowering** your risk of heart disease and certain cancers
- **Strengthening** your muscles and defending against muscle loss
- **Controlling** your weight when combined with healthy eating
- **Lowering** your chance of getting depressed
- **Helping** you sleep better, which gives you more energy



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



## Before you begin any fitness program:

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



## Enjoy feeling healthy

Find the joy in exercising. Think of it as your time. Remind yourself that you're helping your body become more fit. 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 exercise every day?

*Go for walks after lunch and dinner.*

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*Find short exercise videos on the computer.*

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*Take the stairs instead of the elevator.*

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