

Health Tip

Get Up & Go

How much exercise is needed for good health? The good news is you don't have to be an iron man. 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days of the week may provide many of the same benefits as strenuous exercise.

Physical activity is anything that gets the body moving, including walking. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that adults get 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic activity a week (or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity aerobic activity) and 2 or more days of a week of muscle strengthening activities for all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, chest, shoulders and arms).¹

A moderate exercise program may help improve:



- Heart and lung efficiency
- Muscle strength and flexibility
- Fat burning, which may help control weight
- Quality of sleep
- Overall well being
- And help in the reduction of other health risks

So what is vigorous and moderate activity?

Vigorous activity is when you feel challenged by the activity, and when your breathing is hard enough so that conversation becomes difficult and broken. Just think of jogging, swimming continuous laps, or riding a bike uphill, which causes rapid breathing and a faster heart rate.

Moderate activity is a little bit less than vigorous, where you can speak but you feel you are exerting yourself and making an effort. Just think of activities like walking briskly, mowing the lawn, dancing, swimming, or bicycling on level terrain.

Getting 30 minutes of moderate activity on most days, along with two or more days of muscle strengthening activities, has been proven to provide health benefits.³ Here are some examples of activities that are considered moderate intensity:

- **Walking** 2 miles in 30 minutes (a 15 minute mile)
- **Gardening** for 30–45 minutes
- **Pushing a stroller** 1.5 miles in 30 minutes
- **Raking leaves** for 30 minutes
- **Shoveling snow** for 15 minutes
- **Stair walking** for 15 minutes
- **Bicycling** 5 miles in 30 minutes
- **Dancing fast** (social) for 30 minutes
- **Swimming laps** for 20 minutes
- **Wheeling self in wheelchair** for 30–40 minutes
- **Running** 1.5 miles in 15 minutes (a 10 minute mile)

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Did you know?

According to the Department of Health and Human Services, less than 5% of Americans participate in 30 minutes of physical activity each day.² Where do you stack up with that fact?

Consider these tips to help add physical activity into your daily life:



Wake up a little earlier. Start by setting your alarm clock just five minutes earlier. Do stretches and jumping jacks before getting in the shower, or follow a short exercise DVD.



Find a workout buddy. Exercising with a friend can be more fun than working out alone, and it's a good motivator. Ask a coworker to go for a walk during lunch or see if a neighbor wants to walk after work.



Schedule your fitness activities. If you put exercise on your calendar like other appointments, you may be more likely to do it.



Create a home (or desk) gym. If you have equipment always at the ready, it may be easier to steal five minutes to use it. A jump rope, a stability ball, exercise bands and dumbbells may not cost much or take up much room.



Exercise while you work. You may raise your activity level and productivity with neck rolls or arm raises (push hands out to the side and then up toward the ceiling). Or do a few modified push-ups on the edge of your desk.



Park your car furthest away. Get more steps in each day by picking the last parking spot available wherever you go.



Did you know?

Keeping your body hydrated helps the heart to pump blood through the blood vessels to the muscles. And, this helps the muscles to work more efficiently. For most people, water is the best beverage to drink for proper hydration. A good recommendation to follow is to aim for eight 8-ounce glasses, which equals about half a gallon, of water each day. Other sources of water include fruits and vegetables which contain a high percentage of water. Sports drinks with electrolytes, may be helpful for people doing high intensity and vigorous exercise in very hot weather. Because these drinks tend to be high in added sugars and calories they should be consumed in moderation.⁴



1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/walking/index.htm, accessed August 29, 2019.

2. Department of Health and Human Services, www.hhs.gov/fitness/resource-center/facts-and-statistics/index.html, accessed August 29, 2019.

3. American Heart Association, Recommendations for Physical Activity in Adults and Kids, www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/PhysicalActivity/FitnessBasics/Moderate-to-Vigorous-What-is-your-level-of-intensity_UCM_463775_Article.jsp#.WeUmVFSwnQ, accessed August 29, 2019.

4. American Heart Association, Staying Hydrated - Staying Healthy, <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness/fitness-basics/staying-hydrated-staying-healthy>, accessed August 29, 2019.

The information provided in this flier is for general informational purposes only and is not intended nor should be construed as medical advice. Individuals should consult an appropriate medical professional to determine what may be right for them.