

Guide to Physical Activity

An increase in physical activity is an important part of your weight management program. Most weight loss occurs because of decreased caloric intake. Sustained physical activity is most helpful in the prevention of weight regain. In addition, exercise has a benefit of reducing risks of cardiovascular disease and diabetes, beyond that produced by weight reduction alone. Start exercising slowly, and gradually increase the intensity. Trying too hard at first can lead to injury.

Examples of moderate amounts of physical activity

Common Chores

Washing and waxing a car for 45-60 minutes

Washing windows or floors for 45-60 minutes

Gardening for 30-45 minutes

Wheeling self in wheelchair 30-40 minutes

Pushing a stroller 1 1/2 miles in 30 minutes

Raking leaves for 30 minutes

Walking 2 miles in 30 minutes (15min/mile)

Shoveling snow for 15 minutes

Stairwalking for 15 minutes

Sporting Activities

Playing volleyball for 45-60 minutes

Playing touch football for 45 minutes

Walking 1 3/4 miles in 35 minute (20min/mile)

Basketball (shooting baskets) 30 minutes

Bicycling 5 miles in 30 minutes

Dancing fast (social) for 30 minutes

Water aerobics for 30 minutes

Swimming Laps for 20 minutes

Basketball (playing game) for 15-20 minutes

Bicycling 4 miles in 15 minutes

Jumping rope for 15 minutes

Running 1 1/2 miles in 15 min. (10min/mile)

Your exercise can be done all at one time, or intermittently over the day. Initial activities may be walking or swimming at a slow pace. You can start out by walking 30 minutes for three days a week and can build to 45 minutes of more intense walking, at least five days a week. With this regimen, you can burn 100 to 200 calories more per day. All adults should set a long-term goal to accumulate at least 30 minutes or more of moderate-intensity physical activity on most, and preferably all, days of the week. This regimen can be adapted to other forms of physical activity, but walking is particularly attractive because of its safety and accessibility. Also, try to increase "every day" activity such as taking the stairs instead of the elevator. Reducing sedentary time is a good strategy to increase activity by undertaking frequent, less strenuous activities. With time, you may be able to engage in more strenuous activities. Competitive sports, such as tennis and volleyball, can provide an enjoyable form of exercise for many, but care must be taken to avoid injury.

Activity Progression

For the beginner, activity level can begin at very light and would include an increase in standing activities, special chores like room painting, pushing a wheelchair, yard work, ironing, cooking, and playing a musical instrument.

The next level would be light activity such as slow walking of 24 min/mile, garage work, carpentry, house cleaning, child care, golf, sailing, and recreational table tennis.

The next level would be moderate activity such as walking 15 minute/mile, weeding and hoeing a garden, carrying a load, cycling, skiing, tennis, and dancing.

High activity would include walking 10 minute/mile or walking with load uphill, tree felling, heavy manual digging, basketball, climbing, or soccer/kick ball.

You may also want to try:

- flexibility exercise to attain full range of joint motion
- strength or resistance exercise
- aerobic conditioning