

Physical Activity in Your Daily Life

What are some benefits of regular physical activity?

Regular physical activity:

- Gives you more energy
- Builds strength
- Improves your self-image
- Increases energy
- Helps with anxiety and depression
- Improves bone density
- Improves sleep
- Tones muscles
- Helps prevent falls
- Helps maintain energy and control appetite

You need to burn off 3,500 calories more than you take in to lose 1 pound. If you want to lose weight, regular physical activity can help you in either of 2 ways.

1. Eat the same amount of calories, but increase activity. For example, if you weigh 200 pounds and keep eating the same amount of calories as you usually do but decide to walk briskly every day for 1.5 miles, you will lose close to 14 pounds in one year.
2. Eat fewer calories and be more active. This is the optimal choice for losing weight.

Nearly 3/4 of the energy you burn each day comes from what your body utilizes to maintain basic needs such as sleeping, breathing, digesting food, and resting. Adding physical activity to what you do will help burn extra calories.

At Home

It's convenient, comfortable and safe to work out at home. It allows your children to see you being active which sets a good example for them. You can combine your exercise with other activities, such as watching TV. If you buy exercise equipment, it's a one-time expense and other family members can use it. It's easy to have short bouts of activity several times per day.

Try these tips:

- Do housework yourself instead of hiring someone else to do it.
- Work in the garden or mow the grass (using a riding mower doesn't count!). Rake leaves, prune, dig, and pick up trash.
- Go out for a short walk before breakfast, after dinner, or both! Start with 5-10 minutes and work up to 30 minutes.
- Walk or bike to the corner store instead of driving.
- When walking, pick up the pace from leisurely to brisk. Choose a hilly route.
- Walk the dog.

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- Spend a few minutes on your stationary bike while watching TV or do jumping jacks during commercial breaks.
- Park farther away at the shopping mall and walk the extra distance. Wear your walking shoes and sneak in an extra lap or two around the mall.
- Stretch to reach items in high places and squat to look at items at floor level.
- Keep exercise equipment repaired and use it!

At the office

Most of us have sedentary jobs. Work takes up a significant part of the day. What can you do to increase your physical activity during the work day? Why not...:

- Brainstorm project ideas with a coworker while taking a walk.
- Stand while talking on the phone.
- Walk down the hall to speak to someone rather than using the telephone.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator, or cut the ride in half and walk the rest of the way.
- Walk while waiting for the plane at the airport.
- Stay at hotels with fitness centers or swimming pools and use them while on business trips or take along a jump rope in your suitcase when you travel.
- Participate in or start a recreation league at your company.
- Form a sports team to raise money for charity events.
- Join a fitness center or Y near your job. Work out before or after work to avoid rush hour traffic, or stop by for a noon workout.
- Schedule time on your business calendar and treat it as any other important appointment.
- Get off the bus a few blocks early and walk the rest of the way to work or home.
- Walk around your building during the work day or during lunch.

At play

Play and recreation are important for your health. Look for opportunities such as these to be active and have fun at the same time:

- Plan family outings and vacations that include physical activity (hiking, swimming, etc.)
- See the sights in new cities by walking, jogging, or bicycling.
- Make a date with your friend to enjoy your favorite physical activities. Do them regularly.
- Play your favorite music while exercising, something that motivates you.
- Dance with someone or by yourself. Take dance lessons.
- Join a recreational club that emphasizes physical activity.
- At the beach, walk, run, swim, or fly a kite.
- When golfing, walk instead of using a cart.



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