



A Physical Activity Resource



# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

## What are the types of physical activity?

**AEROBIC ACTIVITIES** make you breathe hard and your heart beat faster. Aerobic activities can be moderate or vigorous in intensity. During moderate physical activity, you can talk while you do the activity, but you can't sing. During vigorous physical activity, you can only say a few words without stopping to catch your breath.

**MUSCLE-STRENGTHENING ACTIVITIES** include push-ups, sit-ups, and lifting weights.

**BONE-STRENGTHENING ACTIVITIES** such as jumping, are especially important for children and adolescents. These activities produce a force on the bones that promotes bone growth and strength.

**BALANCE & STRETCHING ACTIVITIES** reduce the risk of injuries. Examples are tai chi and yoga.



## How much physical activity should we do?

### ADULTS

**AEROBIC:** Adults should do at least 150 minutes a week of moderate exercise or 75 minutes a week of vigorous physical activity. This translates to 30 minutes of moderate exercise or 15 minutes of vigorous exercise 5 days a week. Spreading activity over at least 3 days a week is best.

**STRENGTHENING:** Adults should perform strengthening exercises that involve all major muscle groups at least 2 days a week.

### CHILDREN (6-17 years old)

**AEROBIC:** Children should do at least 60 minutes of moderate or vigorous activity each day. Vigorous activity should be done at least 3 days a week. (This is included in the 60 minutes per day.)

**MUSCLE-STRENGTHENING:** As part of the 60 minutes or more, children should do muscle-strengthening activities (like climbing or crossing monkey bars) at least 3 days a week.

**BONE-STRENGTHENING:** As part of the 60 minutes or more, children should do bone-strengthening activities, like jumping, at least 3 days a week.

### YOUNG CHILDREN (3-5 years old)

Preschool-aged children should be physically active through active play throughout the day to enhance growth and development. Caregivers can encourage play through a variety of activities.

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EXTENSION

## Fit physical activity into your day

- Walk briskly to and from the parking lot or bus stop.
- Walk the dog for 15 minutes before or after work.
- Add a 10-minute walk at lunchtime or as a replacement for a coffee break.
- Walk up and down courts, fields, or around the neighborhood when kids are practicing sports.
- Do stretches or exercises while watching television.
- Actively play with kids after school or in the evening.
- Get up 15 minutes early and use this time for a run, walk, sit-ups and push-ups, or stretching.
- Turn chores into exercise. Set the timer for 20 minutes and see how much of the house you can clean. Try to be as efficient and quick-paced as possible.

## Activities when it's cold outside

- Do some shoveling, ice skating, snowshoeing, or sledding.
- Invest in a few small pieces of exercise equipment like a rubber exercise band, light hand weights, or a jump rope to use for indoor exercise.
- Do exercises that use your own body weight to increase your strength. Examples include push-ups, sit-ups, and jumping jacks. Look up a detailed plan so you can vary the exercises, speed, and intensity.
- Some school gyms offer times for community members to walk, work out, or play basketball. Check to see if your community has any free or low-cost indoor exercise options.
- If you have access to the internet at home, look up free exercise videos.
- Check out exercise DVDs from your local library.

## Physical activity as a family

- Plan active family gatherings and celebrations. Take a walk or hike, shoot hoops, play catch or frisbee, or play other active games.
- Enjoy an afternoon bike ride as a family.
- Walk or bike to school together.
- Try physical participation video games.
- Play together at a playground.
- Set up an obstacle course.
- Play a physically active card game. Decide on an exercise for each suit (hearts, diamonds, spades, clubs) and take turns picking cards and performing the exercise the number of times indicated on the card. (For example, if jumping jacks were assigned to spades, a 10 of spades would mean 10 jumping jacks.) Do the exercises together or tag team.
- Put on some music and have a dance party!



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