

# Physical Activity – Every Move Matters!



*We all want to look  
and feel our best.  
Turns out it's easier  
than we thought!*

## Consider these small changes

- Standing at a desk while working
- Pacing while on the phone
- Taking the stairs instead of the elevator

It all adds up! You can do things that you enjoy and, over time, increase the amount of time you're active each day.

Even small amounts of physical activity can:

- Reduce your risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and osteoporosis
- Make your heart and lungs stronger
- Help you sleep better
- Make you more agile and flexible
- Protect against cancers including colon, breast, and cervical
- Help you achieve and maintain a healthy weight
- Strengthen bones, muscles, and joints
- Lower blood pressure
- Increase "good" cholesterol (HDL) which helps prevent heart attacks
- Help prevent or treat depression and reduce stress
- Build confidence and self-esteem
- Make you feel more alert

Physical activity is good for everyone at every age. It's never too late to start.

## How much exercise do I need?

We recommend a minimum of 150 minutes per week of moderate

activity. A good goal to aim for is at least 30 minutes per day on most days of the week.

Build activity into your normal day:

- Take the stairs
- Do errands on foot
- Bike to work
- Get outside to play with your children or grandchildren.
- **Try breaking your exercise into 10- or 15-minute sessions instead of one long session.**

If you haven't been active lately, start small – a little activity is always better than none. Gradually, you can work your way up to a larger goal.

## Types of physical activity

Including these four different types of activity in your week will help you get a well-rounded workout – choose one to start:

**Burn calories and pump up your heart.** Aerobic exercises (cardiovascular) build endurance, and are good for your mental health, too. They raise your heart rate and make you breathe harder. Some examples include:

- Brisk walking
- Jogging
- Dancing
- Swimming
- Skiing
- Hiking
- Bicycling
- Skating

**Muscle burns fat.** Strengthening exercises tone your muscles and keep your bones strong. Some examples include:

- Lifting weights or using weight training machines

- Working with resistance bands
- Using your body weight for resistance, as with pushups, heavy gardening, digging or shoveling, yoga, or Pilates

**Steady on your feet.** Balance exercises help build leg muscles, strengthen your core (abdominal muscles), and help prevent falls. Some examples include:

- Standing on one foot
- Tai chi
- Walking heel-to-toe
- Yoga
- Pilates

**Move more easily.** Flexibility exercises help lengthen your muscles, increase range of motion, and promote circulation. Some examples include:

- Stretches
- Pilates
- Yoga

## How can I get started?

**Choose an activity you enjoy, and start with something you already know how to do.** This is different for everyone: a Salsa dance class could be your first choice, or you might prefer a brisk walk around your neighborhood in the evening.

### Make it fun

- Exercise with a partner.
- Listen to music or watch videos while you work out.
- Take a class at a local community center or gym.
- Do different activities from day to day.
- Keep a moderate pace. If you can't talk while you're exercising, slow down.
- Choose an activity where you don't have to compete.

- Creating a healthier life for yourself is more important than comparing yourself to others.

**Challenge yourself** by setting both short- and long-term goals.

- Want to walk a half marathon or swim 2 miles without stopping? Start by setting realistic short-term goals, like walking a mile or swimming for 10 minutes three times per week.
- Once you are comfortable at that level of activity, you can move on to the next step.

### You can make it happen

- **Schedule the time.** Be specific about when and where you'll exercise, and set aside the time in your schedule. This is an important part of your day, so make a date with yourself - and keep it!
- **Chart your progress.** Many people find it helpful to see their progress over time. Write down the activity you complete in a notebook or online journal. You can keep track of your distance, how long your activity lasted, and how you felt before and afterwards. There are many Internet and Smartphone tools to help you do this, or you can use a paper journal.
- **Find a friend or partner to exercise with you.** You can motivate and support one another, and have more fun being active together. You won't want to cancel a date with a friend.
- **Get motivated.** Find a supportive partner so you can motivate each other.
- **Focus on the positive:** Does exercise make you feel better? Do you sleep better or have more energy? Do you feel less stressed, more confident, or stronger?

## Safety notes

- If you have any ongoing health conditions that prevent you from exercising, please check with your doctor before starting a new exercise plan.
- Don't overdo it. Notice how hard you're breathing and keep in mind this rule: You should still be able to talk, but not sing while exercising.
- Start and end each session with some gentle stretches.
- If you get dizzy or faint, or feel nausea or tightness in your chest, stop immediately.
- Wear comfortable, sturdy shoes and appropriate clothes for the activity and weather. If you exercise outdoors in the evening, wear light-colored or reflective clothing.
- If you listen to music with earphones when you're outdoors, keep one ear free. You need to be able to hear passing cars and other possible safety hazards.

### Other resources

- Visit [kp.org/mydoctor](http://kp.org/mydoctor) regularly for the tools and information your doctor recommends to help keep you healthy, including interactive programs, health classes, and more.
- Telephonic Wellness Coaching for Healthy Weight, Stress, Smoking Cessation, Depression: (866) 251-4514
- Online Health Coach: **mydoctor.kaiserpermanente.org/nca/healthcoach**
- Contact your Kaiser Permanente Health Education Center for health information and resources in your community.

This information is not intended to diagnose or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult with your doctor.