

Eat Right

Food, Nutrition and Health Tips from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics



Smart Ways to Make Physical Activity Part of your Day

While exercise may sound intimidating to some people, it doesn't have to be. Any type and amount of activity is better than none and there are so many enjoyable ways to get moving.

In order to “move more and sit less”, as the new physical activity guidelines recommend, it's important to find activities that you enjoy!

If you like group activities, you can look into virtual classes or those that can be done at a safe distance inside or outdoors. If you prefer being active alone, consider rollerblading, lifting weights or yoga.

Finding time may also be a struggle but being more active can be as simple as taking the stairs instead of the elevator, parking further away, walking or riding a bicycle to the store and cleaning the house or working in the yard.

It's important to choose activities that match your abilities*. If you've never run a mile, it would be better to work up to that goal before training for a marathon. Set realistic goals to avoid risking an injury or becoming discouraged and less active.

For adults, the recommendation is 150 minutes or more of moderate-intensity physical activity each week. This could be as simple as brisk walking for 25 minutes six days per week. Another option would be to walk briskly for only 15 minutes at a time, but twice a day for five days.

To realize the most health benefits, physical activity should be done regularly – meaning most days of the week. How often, how long and the intensity of the activity can make a difference, too.



**For people who are sedentary or have chronic diseases or disabilities, check with your health care provider before increasing physical activity.*

Research has shown that regular physical activity can lead to better health, including a reduced risk for many chronic diseases, such as heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes.

Aerobic activities, such as brisk walking or bicycling, are important for cardiovascular health, because they work out your heart.

Muscle-strengthening activities include some type of resistance, such as weights, elastic bands or your own body weight. Activities that help you increase the strength of different muscles is recommended two times or more per week.

Both aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities may also offer **bone-strengthening benefits**. Activities that involve stretching can help to increase flexibility, or the range of motion for joints.

In order to stay active, find activities that you enjoy. Try these tips to get started:

- Plan ways to gradually increase your physical activity. This could involve setting reminders to move more throughout the day or by scheduling times to be active during the week.
- Think about the best time for physical activity. Some people prefer to be active in the morning, whereas others dedicate time mid-day or after school or work.
- Decide how you want to be active. Walking is convenient for many people. However, others may choose to participate in organized sports or specific exercise programs.

For more information, check out the **Move Your Way** website at health.gov/moveyourway.



To find a registered dietitian nutritionist in your area and get additional food and nutrition information, visit eatright.org

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This tip sheet is provided by:

Authored by Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics staff registered dietitian nutritionists.

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