

## Taking Action With Physical Activity

Congratulations, you're taking action! Remember, physical activity is one of the best things you can do for your health. Plan ahead to make physical activity a regular part of your daily/weekly schedule by putting it on your calendar or fitness tracking app. Adding physical activity to your workday will help you meet your activity goals and also help reset your mind. Try a short walk, walking while listening to your favorite music during your lunch break or take the stairs when possible. Make sure your physical activity plan includes the right frequency, intensity, time and type of activity. Follow the guidelines below and look for ways to develop, maintain or improve your plan.

### Physical Activity Guidelines

Healthy adults ages 18-64 years old should use the following physical activity guidelines.<sup>1</sup>

#### Cardiovascular

- Lose weight and keep it off after weight loss
  - 250-300 minutes of moderate-intensity or 150 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity per week
- Prevent weight gain and reduce the risk of chronic disease
  - 150-250 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity per week

Two minutes of moderate-intensity activity equals one minute of vigorous-intensity activity. Below are examples of activities to consider when establishing or revising your activity plan.

Moderate-Intensity	Vigorous-Intensity
Brisk Walking	Jogging (6 miles per hour) or Running
Water Aerobics	Swimming Laps
Biking (less than 10 miles per hour)	Biking (faster than 10 miles per hour)
Pickleball	Hiking

#### Resistance Strengthening

- Increase muscle mass while decreasing body fat
  - Strengthening activities such as resistance bands or free weights that include all major muscles groups on two or more days per week

#### Flexibility

- Enhance range of motion
  - Exercises such as static or dynamic stretching on two or three days per week

#### Functional

- Improve balance, agility, coordination and gait
  - Activities such as yoga, squats and lunges on two or three days per week

## Develop, Maintain and Improve Physical Activity

Physical activity requires a positive mindset. Unfortunately, we all experience negative thoughts from time to time. That’s why it’s important to understand the advantages of being active. Make a list of the benefits you receive from physical activity and refer back to it to keep yourself on track.

Benefits of Physical Activity

Maintaining a physical activity plan can be a challenge as the comfort and confidence of having a regular routine can easily give way to boredom or disinterest. Keep your dedication and enthusiasm up by finding different ways to stay active. List new types of exercise that you are willing to try. Remember that a well-balanced plan includes a combination of activities and levels of intensity.

New Types of Exercise

Making incremental improvements to your activity plan is key to reaching your weight loss goals. Whether you’re ready for a big or small change, there is always room for advancement. Challenge yourself to increase the amount of time you spend being active. Make a list of your activities, record the current time you do each activity and identify your new goal time.

Physical Activity	Current Time	Goal Time

Finally, consider meeting with a health professional at least once a year to review your physical activity plan and troubleshoot any barriers to success. Exercising with a friend or joining a fitness class can also help you sustain your healthy lifestyle choices.

## Reference

<sup>1</sup>US Department of Health and Human Services. Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2nd edition. Washington, DC: US Department of Health and Human Services; 2018. [https://health.gov/sites/default/files/2019-09/Physical\\_Activity\\_Guidelines\\_2nd\\_edition.pdf](https://health.gov/sites/default/files/2019-09/Physical_Activity_Guidelines_2nd_edition.pdf). Published October 2018. Accessed March 2023.