



Taking Action with Physical Activity

Congratulations, you're taking action! Make sure your physical activity plan includes the right frequency, intensity, time, and type of activity. Consider the guidelines below and look for ways to develop, maintain, or improve your plan.

Physical Activity Guidelines

Healthy adults ages 18-65 years should use the following physical activity guidelines^{1,2}:

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	Running
Water aerobics	Swimming laps
Biking (slower than 10 miles per hour)	Biking (10 miles per hour or faster)

Resistance

- Increase muscle mass while decreasing body fat
 - Strengthening activities such as resistance bands or free weights that include all major muscle 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
 - Neuromotor activities such as yoga or 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 is important to develop an awareness of the advantages of being active. Make a list of the benefits you receive from physical activity and refer back to it often to keep yourself on track.

Benefits of Physical Activity

Maintaining a physical activity plan can be as challenging as developing one. The comfort and confidence of having a regular routine can easily give way to boredom and disinterest. Keep your dedication and enthusiasm up by identifying different ways of staying active. Make a list of new forms of exercise that you are willing to try. Remember that a well-balanced plan includes a combination of activities and levels of intensity.

New Forms of Exercise

Making incremental improvements to your activity plan is key to reaching your weight loss goals. Whether you’re ready for a big change or a 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 your current time, and identify your new goal time.

Physical Activity	Current Time	Goal Time

Finally, consider meeting with a health professional or personal trainer 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.

References

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. <http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/pdf/paguide.pdf>. Published October 2008. Accessed July 2016.

² American College of Sports Medicine. ACSM Issues New Recommendations on Quantity and Quality of Exercise. <http://www.acsm.org/about-acsm/media-room/news-releases/2011/08/01/acsm-issues-new-recommendations-on-quantity-and-quality-of-exercise>. Published 1 August 2011. Accessed July 2016.