

## Fit Well...Putting Together Your Fitness Plan

### Benefits of regular exercise

- Reduces your risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, osteoporosis, diabetes and obesity
- Keeps tendons and ligaments flexible for easier range of motion and movement
- Reduces some of the effects of aging
- Contributes to your mental well-being and helps treat depression
- Helps relieve stress and anxiety
- Increases your energy and endurance
- Helps you sleep better
- Helps you maintain a normal weight by increasing your metabolism (the rate you burn calories)

### How much exercise do I need?

Talk to your doctor about how much exercise is right for you. A good goal for many people is to work up to exercising **4 to 6 times a week for 30 to 60 minutes** at a time. Remember, though, that exercise has so many benefits that any amount is better than none.

### How do I get started?

**Start by talking with your doctor.** This is especially important if you haven't been active, if you have any health problems, or if you're pregnant or elderly.

**Start out slowly.** Begin with a 10-minute period of light exercise or a brisk walk every day and gradually increase how hard you exercise and for how long.

**Break it up into smaller chunks of time during the day** as long as you're doing your activity at a moderate or vigorous effort for **at least 10 minutes at a time.**

### Sneak exercise into your day:

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator
- Go for a walk during lunch or break
- Walk all or part of the way to work
- Do housework at a fast pace

## For Important Health Benefits

### Adults need at least:

	2 hours and 30 minutes (150 minutes) of moderate-intensity aerobic activity (i.e., brisk walking) every week <b>and</b>
	muscle-strengthening activities on 2 or more days a week that work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms).

OR

	1 hour and 15 minutes (75 minutes) of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity (i.e., jogging or running) every week <b>and</b>
	muscle-strengthening activities on 2 or more days a week that work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms).

OR

	An equivalent mix of moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic activity <b>and</b>
	muscle-strengthening activities on 2 or more days a week that work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms).

<http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/adults.html>

## Components of Your Fitness Plan

### Aerobic/Cardiovascular:

**Aerobic activity** or "cardio" gets you breathing harder and your heart beating faster. Aerobic activity provides the result of weight/fat loss by using the large muscles of the body (e.g. arms, legs, back). This movement can be sustained for long periods of time, and the muscles being worked use oxygen for energy.

**Examples include:** walking, jogging, swimming, biking, dancing, and playing sports

**Intensity** is how hard your body is working during activity. **Moderate-intensity aerobic activity** means you're working hard enough to raise your heart rate and break a sweat. One way to tell is that you'll be able to talk, but not sing. **Examples include:** Walking fast, water aerobics, riding a bike on level ground and with few hills, playing doubles tennis, pushing a lawn mower, and playing golf.

**Vigorous-intensity aerobic activity** means you're breathing hard and fast, and your heart rate has gone up quite a bit. If you're working at this level, you won't be able to say more than a few words without pausing for a breath. **Examples include:** jogging or running, swimming laps, riding a bike fast or on hills, playing singles tennis, and playing basketball.

You can do moderate- or vigorous-intensity aerobic activity, or a mix of the two each week. A rule of thumb is that **1 minute of vigorous-intensity activity is about the same as 2 minutes of moderate-intensity activity.**

### **What is weight-bearing exercise?**

The term weight-bearing is used to describe exercises that work against the force of gravity. Weight-bearing exercise is important for building strong bones. Having strong bones helps prevent osteoporosis and bone fractures later in life.

**Examples include:** walking, jogging, hiking, climbing stairs, dancing and weight training.

### **Strength Training:**

Besides aerobic activity, you need to do things **to strengthen your muscles** at least 2 days a week. These activities should work all the major muscle groups of your body (legs, hips, back, chest, abdomen, shoulders, and arms).

**Aim for at least 1 set of muscle-strengthening activities, but to gain even more benefits, do 2 or 3 sets.** Do 8—12 repetitions per activity for 1 set.

A **repetition** is one complete movement of an activity, like lifting a weight or doing a sit-up. To gain health benefits, muscle-strengthening activities need to be done to the point where it's hard for you to do another repetition without assistance.

You can do activities that strengthen your muscles on the same or different days that you do aerobic activity, whatever works best. Do NOT exercise the same muscles on 2 consecutive days. Give them a rest!

There are many ways you can strengthen your muscles, whether it's at home or the gym. **Examples include:** Lifting weights, using resistance bands or bars, doing exercises that use your body weight for resistance (i.e., push ups, sit ups), or heavy gardening (i.e., digging, shoveling).

### **Stretching/Flexibility:**

Flexibility exercises should consist of range of motion exercises and static stretching. The stretches should be done at the end of the warm-up or cool-down, after the body is warm. Never use bouncing or ballistic movement to stretch a muscle group. Stretching can be done almost anywhere – preferably daily.

### **How do I stick with it?**

Here are some tips that will help you start and stick with an exercise program:

- **Choose something you like to do.** The best exercise is the one you will do.
- **Get a partner.** Exercising with someone else can make it more fun and hold you accountable.
- **Vary your routine.** You may be less likely to get bored or injured if you change your routine. Walk one day. Bicycle the next. Consider activities like dancing and racquet sports, and even chores like washing the car.
- **Choose a comfortable time of day.** Don't work out too soon after eating or when it's too hot or cold outside. Wait until later in the day or take your workout indoors.
- **Don't get discouraged.** It can take weeks before you notice some of the changes from exercise.

- **Forget "no pain, no gain."** While a little soreness is normal after you first start exercising, pain isn't. Stop if you hurt.
- **Make exercise fun.** For example, read, listen to music or watch TV while riding a stationary bicycle. Find fun things to do, like taking a walk through the mall. Go hiking. Learn how to play tennis.

### Making exercise a habit

- Stick to a regular time every day.
- Sign a contract committing you to exercise.
- Put "exercise appointments" on your calendar.
- Keep a daily log or diary of your activities.
- Check your progress. Can you walk a certain distance faster now than when you began? Is your heart rate slower now?
- Work with a trainer to provide you a personalized exercise program.
- Think about joining a gym. The cost gives some people an incentive to exercise regularly.

### How can I prevent injuries?

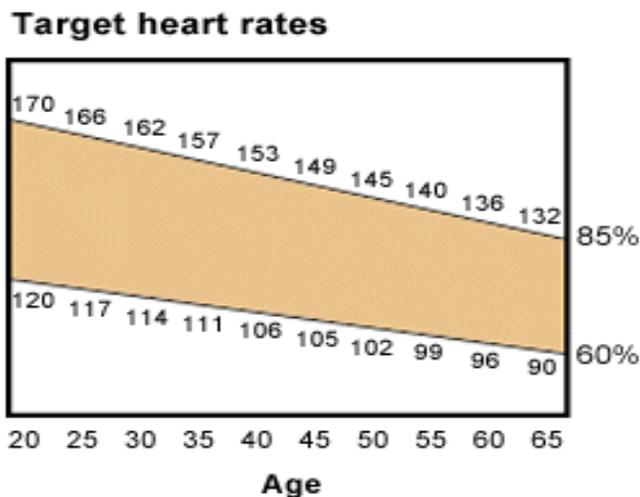
Start every workout with a **warm-up**. That will make your muscles and joints more flexible. Spend 5 to 10 minutes doing a warm-up before exercising. After you're done working out—**cool down** at a lower intensity and stretch.

Pay attention to your body. Stop exercising if you feel very out of breath, dizzy, faint or nauseated, or have pain.

### What is a Target Heart Rate?

Measuring your heart rate (beats per minute) can tell you how hard your heart is working. You can check your heart rate by counting your pulse for 10 seconds and multiplying the beats by 6

The chart below shows the target heart rates for people of different ages. When you're just beginning an exercise program, shoot for the lower target heart rate (60%). As your fitness improves, you can exercise harder to get your heart rate closer to the top number (85%).



Source: American Academy of Family Physicians