

*A Guide to Understanding Physical Activity...*



# Getting Physically Active

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# Understanding Physical Activity



## Is Exercise From Daily Activities Enough?

Most Americans get little vigorous exercise at work or during leisure hours. Today, only a few jobs require vigorous physical activity. People usually ride in cars or buses and watch TV during their free time rather than be physically active. Activities like golfing and bowling provide people with some benefit. But they do not provide the same benefits as regular, more vigorous exercise.

Evidence suggests that even low- to moderate-intensity activities can have both short- and long-term benefits. If done daily, they help lower your risk of heart disease. Such activities include pleasure walking, stair climbing, gardening, yardwork, moderate to heavy housework, dancing and home exercise. More vigorous exercise can help improve fitness of the heart and lungs, which can provide even more consistent benefits for lowering heart disease risk.

Today, many people are rediscovering the benefits of regular, vigorous exercise—activities like swimming, brisk walking, running, or jumping rope. These kinds of activities are sometimes called "aerobic"—meaning the body uses oxygen to produce the energy needed for the activity. Aerobic exercises can condition your heart and lungs if performed at the proper intensity for at least 30 minutes, 3-4 times a week.

But you don't have to train like a marathon runner to become more physically fit! Any activity that gets you moving around, even if it's done for just a few minutes each day, is better than none at all. For inactive people, the trick is to get started. One great way is to take a walk for 10-15 minutes during your lunch break. Other ideas in this booklet will help you get moving and living a more active life.

# What Are The Benefits Of Regular Physical Activity?

These are the benefits often experienced by people who get regular physical activity.

## Feeling Better

*Regular physical activity*

- ✓ gives you more energy
- ✓ helps in coping with stress
- ✓ improves your self-image
- ✓ increases resistance to fatigue
- ✓ helps counter anxiety and depression
- ✓ helps you to relax and feel less tense
- ✓ improves the ability to fall asleep quickly and sleep well
- ✓ provides an easy way to share an activity with friends or family and an opportunity to meet new friends

## Looking Better

*Regular physical activity*

- ✓ tones your muscles
- ✓ burns off calories to help lose extra pounds or helps you stay at your desirable weight
- ✓ helps control your appetite

You need to burn off 3,500 calories more than you take in to lose 1 pound. If you want to lose weight, regular physical activity can help you in either of two ways.

First, you can eat your usual amount of calories, but be more active. For example: A 200-pound person who keeps on eating the same amount of calories, but decides to walk briskly each day for 1 1/2 miles will lose about 14 pounds in 1 year. Or second, you can eat fewer calories and be more active. This is an even better way to lose weight.

The average calories spent per hour by a 150-pound person are listed below. (A lighter person burns fewer calories; a heavier person burns more.) Since exact calorie figures are not available for most activities, the figures below are averaged from several sources and show the relative vigor of the activities.

Activity	Calories Burned
>> Bicycling 6 mph	240 cal./hr.
>> Bicycling 12 mph	410 cal./hr.
>> Cross-country skiing	700 cal./hr.
>> Jogging 5 1/2 mph	740 cal./hr.
>> Jogging 7 mph	920 cal./hr.
>> Jumping rope	750 cal./hr.
>> Running in place	650 cal./hr.
>> Running 10 mph	1280 cal./hr.
>> Swimming 25 yds/min.	275 cal./hr.
>> Swimming 50 yds/min.	500 cal./hr.
>> Tennis-singles	400 cal./hr.
>> Walking 2 mph	240 cal./hr.
>> Walking 3 mph	320 cal./hr.
>> Walking 4 1/2 mph	440 cal./hr.

The calories spent in a particular activity vary in proportion to one's body weight. For example, a 100-pound person burns 1/3 fewer calories, so you would multiply the number of calories by 0.7. For a 200-pound person, multiply by 1.3.

Working harder or faster for a given activity will only slightly increase the calories spent. A better way to burn up more calories is to increase the time spent on your activity.

## Working Better

*Regular physical activity*

- ✓ helps you to be more productive at work
- ✓ increases your capacity for physical work
- ✓ builds stamina for other physical activities
- ✓ increases muscle strength
- ✓ helps your heart and lungs work more efficiently

# Physical Activity And Your Heart

## The Benefits Of A Well-Conditioned Heart

In 1 minute with 45 to 50 beats, the heart of a well-conditioned person pumps the same amount of blood as an inactive person's heart pumps in 70 to 75 beats. Compared to the well-conditioned heart, the average heart pumps up to 36,000 more times per day, 13 million more times per year.

Feeling, looking, and working better—all these benefits from regular physical activity can help you enjoy your life more fully.

## Can Physical Activity Reduce My Chances Of Having A Heart Attack?

Yes! Various studies have shown that physical inactivity is a risk factor for heart disease. Overall, the results show heart disease is almost twice as likely to develop in inactive people than in those who are more active. Regular physical activity (even mild to moderate exercise) can help reduce your risk of heart disease. In fact, burning calories through physical activity may help you lose weight or stay at your desirable weight - which also helps lower your risk of heart disease. The best exercises to strengthen your heart and lungs are the aerobic ones like brisk walking, jogging, cycling and swimming.

Coronary artery disease is the major cause of heart disease and heart attack in America. It develops when fatty deposits build up on the inner walls of the blood vessels feeding the heart (coronary arteries). Eventually one or more of the major coronary arteries may become blocked - either by the buildup of deposits or by a blood clot forming in the artery's narrowed passageway. The result is a heart attack.

We know that there are several factors that can increase your risk for developing coronary artery disease—and thus the chances for a heart attack. Fortunately, many of these risk factors can be reduced or eliminated.

**“In 1 minute with 45 to 50 beats, the heart of a well-conditioned person pumps the same amount of blood as an inactive person's heart pumps in 70 to 75 beats.”**



## Heart Disease Risk Factors That You Can Do Something About

Cigarette Smoking, High Blood Pressure, High Blood Cholesterol, Physical Inactivity and Obesity. The more risk factors you have, the greater your risk for heart disease and heart attack.

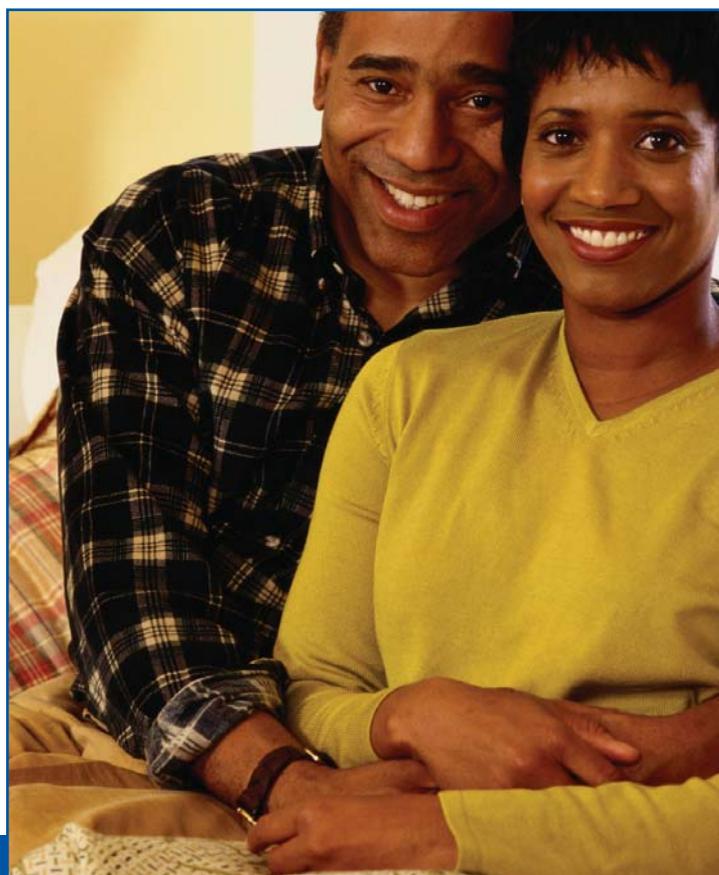
- ✓ **Cigarette Smoking.** Heavy smokers are two to four times more likely to have a heart attack than nonsmokers. The heart attack death rate among all smokers is 70 percent greater than among nonsmokers. People who are active regularly are more likely to cut down or stop cigarette smoking.
- ✓ **High Blood Pressure.** The higher your blood pressure, the greater your risk of developing heart disease or stroke. A blood pressure of 140/90 mmHg (millimeters of mercury) or greater is generally classified as high blood pressure. Regular physical activity, even of moderate intensity, can help reduce high blood pressure in some people. This type of activity may also help prevent high blood pressure.
- ✓ **High Blood Cholesterol.** A blood cholesterol level of 240 mg/dl (milligrams per decaliter) or above is high and increases your risk of heart disease. A total blood cholesterol of under 200 mg/dl is desirable and usually puts you at a lower risk of heart disease. Cholesterol in the blood is transported by different types of particles. One of these particles is a protein called high density lipoprotein or HDL. HDL has been called "good" cholesterol because research has shown that high levels of HDL are linked with a lower risk of coronary artery disease. Regular moderate-to-vigorous physical activity is linked with increased HDL levels.
- ✓ **Physical Inactivity.** The lack of physical activity increases your risk for developing heart disease. Even persons who have had a heart attack can increase their chances of survival if they change their habits to include regular physical activity. It can help control blood lipids, diabetes and obesity as well as help to lower blood pressure. Also, physical activity of the right intensity, frequency and duration can increase the fitness of your heart and lungs—which may help protect you against heart disease even if you have other risk factors.

- ✓ **Obesity.** Excess weight may increase your risk of developing high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol and diabetes. Regular physical activity can help you maintain your desirable body weight. People at their desirable weight are less likely to develop diabetes. And, exercise may also decrease a diabetic person's need for insulin.

Remember that even if you are active, you should not ignore other risk factors. Reduce or eliminate any risk factors you can to lower your chances of having a heart attack.

### Heart Healthy Tips:

- >> Stay physically active.
- >> Stop smoking and avoid other people's smoke if possible.
- >> Control high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol.
- >> Cut down on total fats, saturated fats, cholesterol and salt in your diet.
- >> Reduce weight if overweight.



# The Benefits & The Risks

## Are There Any Risks In Exercising?

### Muscles And Joints

One of the most common risks in exercising is injury to the muscles and joints. This usually happens from exercising too hard or for too long—particularly if a person has been inactive for some time. However, most of these injuries can be prevented or easily treated if you follow the tips found on pages 12 and 13.

### Heat Exhaustion And Heat Stroke

If precautions are not taken during hot, humid days, heat exhaustion or heat stroke can occur—although they are fairly rare. Heat stroke is the more serious of the two. Their symptoms are similar:

### Heat Exhaustion Risks

- >> Dizziness
- >> Headache
- >> Nausea
- >> Confusion
- >> Body Temperature below normal

### Heat Stroke Risks

- >> Dizziness
- >> Headache
- >> Nausea
- >> Thirst
- >> Muscle Cramps
- >> Sweating Stops
- >> High Body Temperature

The last two symptoms of heat stroke are important to know. If the body temperature becomes dangerously high, it can be a serious problem.

Both heat exhaustion and heat stroke can be avoided if you drink enough liquids to replace those lost during exercise.

### Heart Problems

In some cases, people have died while exercising. Most of these deaths are caused by overexertion in people who already had heart conditions. In people under age 30, these heart conditions are usually congenital heart defects (heart defects present at birth). In people over age 40, the heart condition is usually coronary artery disease (the buildup of deposits of fats in the heart's blood vessels). Many of these deaths have been preceded by warning signs such as chest pain, lightheadedness, fainting and extreme breathlessness. These are symptoms that should not be ignored and should be brought to the attention of a doctor immediately.



Some of the deaths that occur during exercise are not caused by the physical effort itself. Death can occur at any time and during any kind of activity—even eating and sleeping. This does not necessarily mean that a particular activity caused the death—only that the two events happened at the same time.

No research studies have shown that physically active people are more likely to have sudden, fatal heart attacks than inactive people. In fact, a number of studies have shown a reduced risk of sudden death for people who are physically active.

Exercising too hard is not beneficial for anyone, however, and is especially strenuous for out-of-shape, middle-aged and older persons. It is very important for these people to follow a gradual and sound exercise program.

If you consider the time your body may have been out of shape, it is only natural that it will take time to get it back into good condition. A gradual approach will help you maximize your benefits and minimize your risks.

### What If I've Had A Heart Attack?

Regular, brisk physical activity can help reduce your risk of having another heart attack. People who include regular physical activity in their lives after a heart attack improve their chances of survival. Regular exercise can also improve the quality of your life—how you feel and look. It can help you do more than before without pain (angina) or shortness of breath.

If you've had a heart attack, consult your doctor to be sure you are following a safe and effective exercise program. Your doctor's guidance is very important because it could help prevent heart pain and further damage from overexertion.

“One of the most common risks in exercising is injury to the muscles and joints.”

## Benefits vs. Risks

Should you begin a regular exercise program? Consider the ways physical activity can benefit you and weigh them against the possible risks.

### Potential Benefits

- ✓ more energy and capacity for work and leisure activities
- ✓ greater resistance to stress, anxiety and fatigue, and a better outlook on life
- ✓ increased stamina, strength and flexibility
- ✓ improved efficiency of the heart and lungs
- ✓ loss of extra pounds or body fat
- ✓ help in staying at desirable weight
- ✓ reduced risk of heart attack

### Potential Risks

- ✓ muscle or joint injuries
- ✓ heat exhaustion or heat stroke on hot days (rare)
- ✓ aggravation of existing or hidden heart problems



# Five Myths About Exercise

## MYTH 1: Exercising Makes You Tired.

As they become more physically fit, most people feel physical activity gives them even more energy than before. Regular, moderate-to-brisk exercise can also help you reduce fatigue and manage stress.

## MYTH 2: Exercising Takes Too Much Time.

It only takes a few minutes a day to become more physically active. To condition your heart and lungs, regular exercise does not have to take more than about 30 to 60 minutes, three or four times a week. If you don't have 30 minutes in your schedule for an exercise break, try to find two 15-minute periods or even three 10-minute periods. Once you discover how much you enjoy these exercise breaks, you may want to make them a habit! Then physical activity becomes a natural part of your life.

## MYTH 3: All Exercises Give You The Same Benefits.

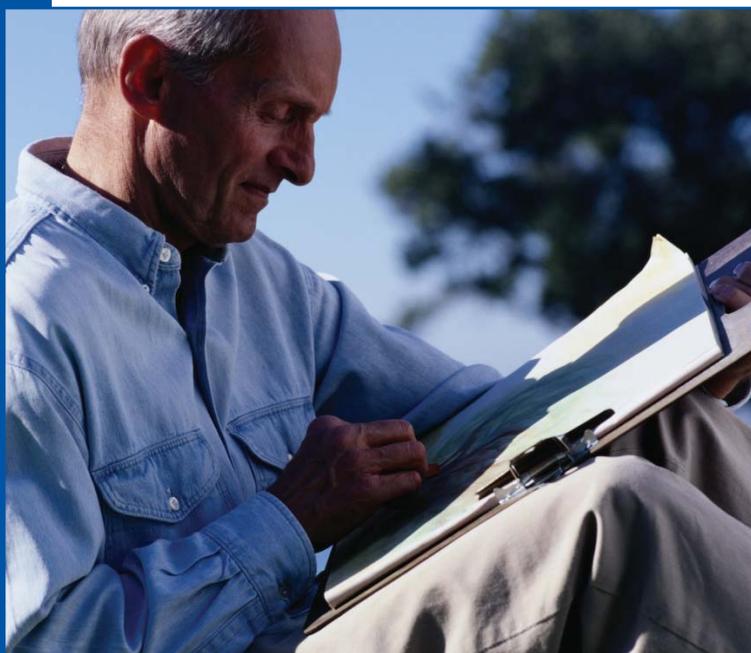
All physical activities can give you enjoyment. Low-intensity activities—if performed daily—also can have some long-term health benefits and lower your risk of heart disease. But only regular, brisk and sustained exercises such as brisk walking, jogging or swimming improve the efficiency of your heart and lungs and burn off substantial extra calories. Other activities may give you other benefits such as increased flexibility or muscle strength, depending on the type of activity.

## MYTH 4: The Older You Are, The Less Exercise You Need.

We tend to become less active with age, and therefore need to make sure we are getting enough physical activity. In general, middle-aged and older people benefit from regular physical activity just as young people do. Age need not be a limitation. In fact, regular physical activity in older persons increases their capacity to perform activities of daily living. What is important, no matter what your age, is tailoring the activity program to your own fitness level.

## MYTH 5: You Have To Be Athletic To Exercise.

Most physical activities do not require any special athletic skills. In fact, many people who found school sports difficult have discovered that these other activities are easy to do and enjoy. A perfect example is walking—an activity that requires no special talent, athletic ability or equipment.



# Before Starting

## Exercise Do's And Dont's...

Getting started with a regular exercise program is one of the best decisions you can make for your life. But before you jump right in, there are a few things you should know. Exercising safely is extremely important—without a firm grasp on the basics of staying safe, you could become injured, cutting short your quest to get in shape.

In the following pages, we'll cover the basics of safe exercise. From proper stretching techniques, to starting slowly, you'll learn what to look for (and what to look out for) when beginning a regular exercise routine. By paying attention to a few important details, you'll be well on your way to achieving your fitness goals and living a longer, healthier life—without getting injured along the way.



## Before You Start An Exercise Program...

Most people do not need to see a doctor before they start since a gradual, sensible exercise program will have minimal health risks. However, some people should seek medical advice.

Use the following checklist to find out if you should consult a doctor before you start or significantly increase your physical activity.\* Mark those items that apply to you:

- Your doctor said you have a heart condition and recommended only medically supervised physical activity.
- During or right after you exercise, you frequently have pains or pressure in the left or mid-chest area, left neck, shoulder or arm.
- You have developed chest pain within the last month.
- You tend to lose consciousness or fall over due to dizziness.
- You feel extremely breathless after mild exertion.
- Your doctor recommended you take medicine for your blood pressure or a heart condition.
- Your doctor said you have bone or joint problems that could be made worse by the proposed physical activity.
- You have a medical condition or other physical reason not mentioned here which might need special attention in an exercise program. (For example, insulin-dependent diabetes.)
- You are middle-aged or older, have not been physically active, and plan a relatively vigorous exercise program.

If you've checked one or more items, see your doctor before you start. If you've checked no items, you can start on a gradual, sensible program of increased activity tailored to your needs. If you feel any of the physical symptoms listed above when you start your exercise program, contact your doctor right away.

*\*This checklist has been developed from several sources, particularly the Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire, British Columbia Ministry of Health, Department of National Health and Welfare, Canada (revised 1992).*

# Preparing To Exercise

## Five Steps For Success

Making physical activity a part of your daily life isn't an easy undertaking. It takes dedication, will power, patience, and a lot of hard work. But believe it or not, it's not as hard as it may first appear, and you might even be surprised to find that you enjoy your newfound lifestyle and the benefits it offers. But before we jump right in we'll want to look at five steps that will help you stay safe, have fun, and be successful at getting fit. Let's take a look at these five rules.

### Step #1—Talk With Your Doc.

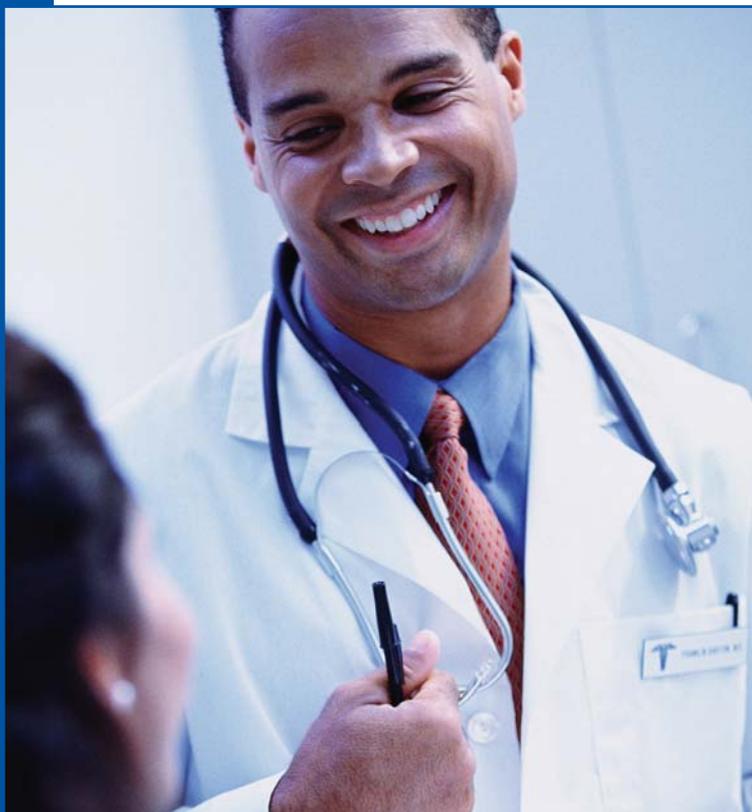
It's important to talk with your healthcare provider to identify whether your plans for physical activity are safe and right for you (see Checklist on page 9). Factors to consider include your blood pressure, past health problems, and current health conditions like diabetes or arthritis. All of these factors can have an impact on your exercise routine, and your health. Talking with your doc can help you identify issues that could harm or injure you while exercising, as well as help you put together a plan to work around those issues safely.

### Step #2—Identify Your Barriers.

Beginning an exercise routine, especially if you've never been all that physically active, may seem a little frightening at first. So, by identifying barriers, you can confront them head on and prevent them from getting in your way. Common barriers include a fear of discomfort, a lack of time, or risk of injury. Begin by examining what barriers have prevented you from being physically active in the past, and find ways to address them. Ask questions like, "Do I really not have time to exercise, or am I just not making time for exercise?"

### Step #3—Choose Your Weapon.

Identify what you're going to do to get physically active. Are you going to join a gym, start by walking, take on a new sport, or sign up for an aerobics or other fitness class? Start by taking an inventory of the things you like to do or maybe the things you're good at. If you're of the mindset that you only run when being chased, choosing an activity like jogging probably isn't going to help you get and stay active.





You'll also want to give some consideration to any special equipment or clothing you may need for the activity of your choice. The proper gear may not only make your activity more enjoyable, but also, in some cases, help protect you from injury or discomfort.

#### Step #4—Set Your Goals.

Goals are actually one of the most important parts of your plan to get physically active. In many ways, they provide the roadmap for your success. Basically, you can't get to where you want, if you don't know where you're going. Begin by identifying what you want to accomplish by getting active. Maybe you want to lose 33 pounds, or maybe you want to fit into your favorite swimming suit by summer. Write down your goals and make them public. Doing so can help keep you motivated as you set out on your journey. Also, try setting mini goals that lead towards your main goal. If you want to lose 30 pounds in 4 months, set a goal of losing 8 pounds per month. And lastly, reward yourself each time you accomplish one of your goals—especially the big ones.

#### Step #5—Get Motivated.

Motivation will be a key factor in your success towards getting fit. Because exercising—at least at first—can be a little uncomfortable, it can be hard to stay motivated. Always keep in mind why you started exercising to begin with. What goals did you set? Keep in mind the benefits of your exercise program versus the consequences of giving up. Also, try to find someone who will support you or—even better—exercise with you. Having someone to keep you on track when you feel like loafing may just make the difference between success and starting over next year.

## Play It Safe: Start Slowly And Build

There's probably nothing that can spoil your plans for getting physically fit faster, or more painfully, than getting injured. When beginning any new activity, the most important thing to remember is to start slowly and build. Taking on too much, too fast dramatically increases the chances that you'll get hurt in your quest to get well. Injury is a major reason many people never successfully reach their fitness goals. Starting slowly and building is the best way to play it safe, and perform better at your chosen activity.

Also, keep the following recommendations in mind as you begin your exercise routine.

- 1. Learn and understand the inherent risk of the activity you're taking part in.** What muscles are you more likely to pull, or what other ways could you be injured?
- 2. Use the recommended safety gear for your activity.** Walking or jogging in the wrong shoes could be just as dangerous as playing ice hockey without a helmet.
- 3. Learn the proper technique for what you're doing.** While learning to walk properly is probably easier than learning to golf, understanding the basics involved in your activity will not only help you perform better, but also minimize the chances that you get injured.
- 4. Always, always, always, listen to your body.** No matter how strenuous or mild your chosen activity is, you should never experience pain! Pain is a sign that something is wrong and that you need to stop!

Starting slowly and building is the best way to play it safe, and perform better at your chosen activity.

# Exercise For Gain, Not Pain

## Stretching

If your idea of stretching is to reach across the table for another chicken wing, think again. Stretching is a great way for everyone to prevent aches and pains and can also help prevent injuries from overuse and repetitive motions, which account for one-third of all missed workdays. So what do you need to know about stretching? Remember the four basics—how to start, how to stretch, how often, and how long.

### How Do I Start?

Warming up can help your stretching results. A light warm-up before stretching can help increase your range of motion, but will not prevent injury. Try jumping jacks or walking in place to get the muscles active and warm.

### How Should I Stretch?

Slow and controlled—not fast—and avoid bouncing. Also, it's best to hold the stretch continuously for 15 to 30 seconds per muscle group. If you feel any pain, back off. Pain is your body's way of telling you that you have gone beyond your limits.

### How Often?

One stretch per muscle group, once a day should be sufficient. However, some muscle groups may require more stretching.

### How Long?

For 15 to 30 seconds per muscle group. Research shows that this is effective for both immediate and long-term results.

These recommendations are for healthy individuals. If you are injured or have other health conditions, be sure to consult your physician before starting a routine.

*Source: Physicians and Sportsmedicine*

“If your idea of stretching is to reach across the table for another chicken wing, think again.”



## 6 Tips For Safe Exercise

Are you a “weekend warrior?” Do you try to push yourself during exercise or sports even when you know you shouldn’t? If you answered, “yes” to these questions, you’re a prime candidate for an exercise injury. In addition to following the central recommendations in this booklet, keep the following six quick tips in mind to stay even safer when exercising.

- 1 | Get good advice.** Consulting a professional—like a personal trainer—on how to use equipment and build your ability will help you improve your skills and exercise safely. Often, an initial consultation is free of charge.
- 2 | Wear proper clothing.** Lightweight, breathable clothing is important when exercising indoors or in high heat/humidity. Remember to wear several layers when exercising in cold temperatures. Also, try to stay comfortable—tight clothing can cause irritation and chaffing.
- 3 | Get equipped.** Safety equipment—whether you like the way it looks or not—can go a long way in helping you prevent injury. Helmets are especially important if engaging in outside activities like bicycling or rollerblading.
- 4 | Don’t make the same mistake twice.** Injuries are often the result of overuse—running too fast or too far, too soon. If you get injured or experience discomfort, don’t just “work through it” blindly. Determine how it happened and correct the problem.
- 5 | Get plenty of rest.** Exercising before an old injury has time to fully heal can lead to another injury. If you’re still in pain, or the injury site is still inflamed, don’t exercise.
- 6 | Continually educate yourself.** Even after you’re in great shape, and you’ve worked through most of your questions, it’s still a good idea to try to learn more about exercising properly. A variety of great websites and books are available to help keep you in the know.



# Working Out Is Right For You

## Activate Yourself!

As mentioned throughout this booklet, exercising is one of the most important steps you can take to leading a long and healthy life. Regular physical activity has been shown to reduce your risk for heart disease, help you control your weight, lower your cholesterol levels, improve your blood pressure, reduce stress and increase energy. But you have to exercise the right way to obtain these benefits.

Health experts generally agree that adults should engage in “moderate-intensity” physical activity for at least 30 minutes on 5 or more days of the week. But what is “moderate intensity,” and how can you be sure you’re working out at a level that will provide long-term health benefits? Read on to get answers to these important questions.



## Getting In The Zone

Understanding how certain activities rate on the intensity scale is only the beginning when it comes to getting a good workout. To truly get health benefits, train aerobically, lose weight, and derive long term health benefits, you’ll need to “get in the zone,”—in the target heart rate zone that is.

Determining your target heart rate is a fairly easy process. The simplest way to do it is to subtract your age from 220. This will give you your maximum heart rate (the maximum number of times your heart can safely beat in one minute).

Once you have determined your maximum heart rate, you’ll want to exercise with enough intensity to keep your heart rate between 60 and 70% of your maximum heart rate. After approximately six months of regular exercise, you can safely exercise up to about 85% of your maximum heart rate.

Check out the example target heart rate calculation below to get a better look at calculating your target heart rate.

### Calculating Target Heart Rate

(Example for a 45 year old individual)

$$220 \text{ minus age } (45) = 175 \text{ beats per minute} \\ \text{(maximum heart rate)}$$

$$60 - 70\% \text{ of } 175 = 105 - 123 \text{ beats per minute}$$

$$85\% \text{ of } 175 = 149 \text{ beats per minute}$$

By exercising between 60 and 85% of your maximum heart rate, you’ll increase your cardiovascular fitness, lose weight, and derive long term health benefits.

## Target Heart Rate Made Easy!

### Using A Heart Rate Monitor

These days, determining your heart rate while exercising is a snap—get a heart rate monitor (HRM). A heart rate monitor is a simple strap that fits snugly around your chest that measures your heart rate and transmits the data to a device worn like a wristwatch.

Available at almost all sporting goods stores, basic heart rate monitors (\$50-\$75) will accurately tell you your heart rate and record information on your exercise session. Some more expensive models can provide other information like:

- ✓ Number of calories burned in a workout
- ✓ Average heart rate over entire exercise period
- ✓ Fat calories burned
- ✓ Time “in the zone”

Using a heart rate monitor eliminates the guesswork most people have about their workouts, and the benefits are huge. You’ll know that each workout is an investment in your future.

## Take The Test

If you don’t feel like wearing a heart rate monitor or calculating beats per minute, there’s a simple test you can do while exercising to determine the intensity of your workout. It’s called the “talk test.”

The talk test method of measuring intensity is simple. If you’re exercising at a light intensity level you should be able to sing while doing the activity. If you’re exercising at a moderate intensity level you should be able to carry on a conversation comfortably while engaging in the activity. Finally, if you become winded, or too out of breath to carry on a conversation, you’re exercising at a vigorous intensity level.

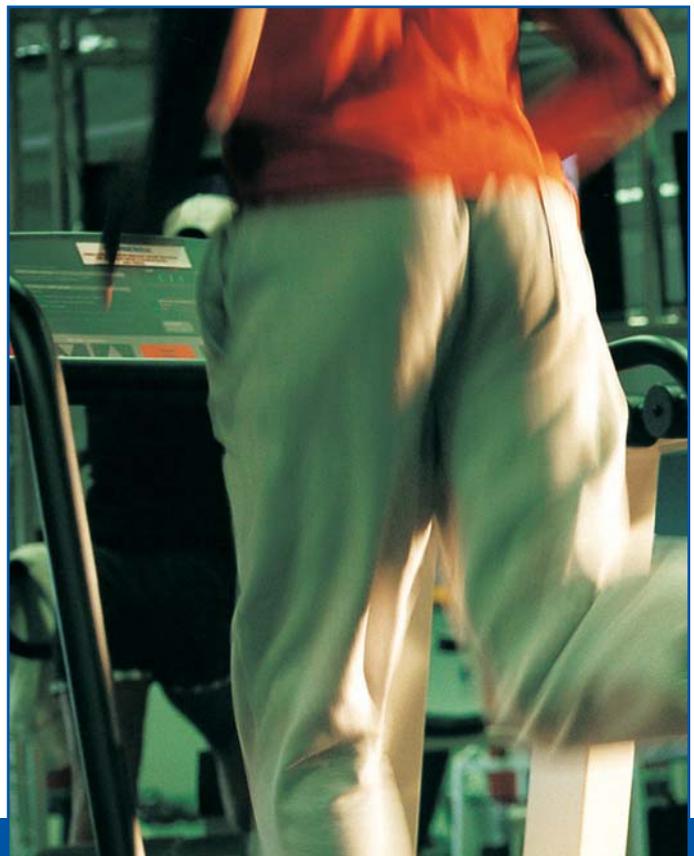
Try the talk test. It’s tried and true, and has helped many exercisers maximize their workouts.

## A Matter Of Feel

The third method of determining physical activity intensity is a method called the Borg Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE). While it may sound complicated, RPE is simply a measure of how hard you feel like your body is working. It is based on the physical sensations you experience during physical activity—things like a higher heart rate, breathing harder, or sweating more.

Although this is a subjective measure, experts agree that RPE provides a fairly good estimate of the actual heart rate during physical activity. The RPE scale starts at six (classified as “no exertion” whatsoever) and goes up to 20 (called “maximal exertion”). To keep your exercise at a moderate level, shoot for a workout that feels like you’re at 12 – 14 on the scale.

Obviously, you’ll get better at ranking your workout as you exercise more, but give RPE a try—without a heart rate monitor, or a workout buddy to talk to, it may be your best bet to measure workout intensity.





## Getting Physically Active

A Guide to Understanding Physical Activity

### *Important information on Physical Activity*

## Working Out Is Right For You

Exercise may very well be the magic bullet. It's important to get off on the right foot. Check out the following before getting started.

- ✓ **Talk to your healthcare provider.** If it's been a long time since you last got any physical activity, be sure to talk with your doctor about the best way to begin your exercise program.
- ✓ **Choose activities that are right for you.** Choosing an activity you like will help you stick with it.
- ✓ **Be comfortable.** Make sure your clothing and shoes encourage exercise, not hamper it.
- ✓ **Find a friend.** Having someone to exercise with is more fun than going it alone. It also increases the chances that you'll exercise more.
- ✓ **Don't overdo it.** If it's been a while, start with lighter intensity activities and build from there.

### **Getting Physically Active: A Guide To Understanding Physical Activity**

The information found on pages 1-9 of this booklet was gathered from a publication developed by the American Heart Association (AHA) and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI). This pamphlet was originally developed by the NHLBI (NIH 81-1677) and has been adapted and reprinted by the American Heart Association for use in public education and community service programs. The information is in the public domain and may be used and reprinted without permission.

The information found on pages 10-16 was taken from WELCOA's line of Physical Activity brochures. All information has been reviewed for accuracy. This information is not intended to replace the advice of your health care provider. If you have any questions about managing your own health and/or seeking medical care, please contact a medical professional.



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