

Weekly Activity/Exercise Pyramid

Benefits of Exercise

Activities are things you do each day, such as brushing your teeth, making a meal, or doing crafts, hobbies and housework.

If you do strenuous work at your job, such as climbing ladders or lifting heavy loads, it is considered activity instead of exercise.

Exercises are physical exertion activities you do for the purpose of strengthening and conditioning your muscles.

When exercise is done on a regular basis, it helps increase your tolerance for activity and more exercise, improves your overall health and reduces your risk for heart disease. It also helps you handle and recover from stress. Remember, your heart is a muscle. Think of exercise as medicine for your heart.

Weekly Activity/Exercise

Do your normal activities, unless your health care provider gives you other instructions. Be cautious of working in a stooped or bent position for long periods of time. Avoid strenuous activities (such as snow shoveling, running or weightlifting) until your health care provider gives you approval.

There are two types of exercise:

- **aerobic.** Aerobic exercise is a rhythmic, repetitive activity such as walking, swimming and biking that continues for up to 30 minutes. This exercise restores a steady supply of oxygen to the muscles that are being exercised.
- **strength training.** Strength training improves your muscle strength and tone, reduces body fat and reduces pain in your low back. There are several different types of strength training: exercise balls, elastic bands, cuff and hand weights, free weights, wall pulleys and weight machines.

Be sure to warm up before doing any exercise. Do light exercises and stretching. After exercising, be sure to cool down with light exercises and stretching as well.

Also, if you feel dizzy, short of breath or have chest pain during any activity or exercise, stop right away.

Think of your weekly activity/exercise as a pyramid.

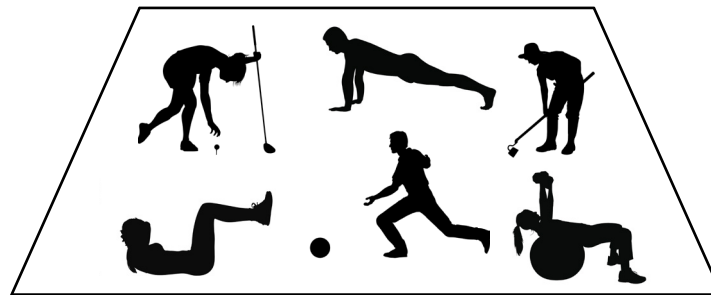
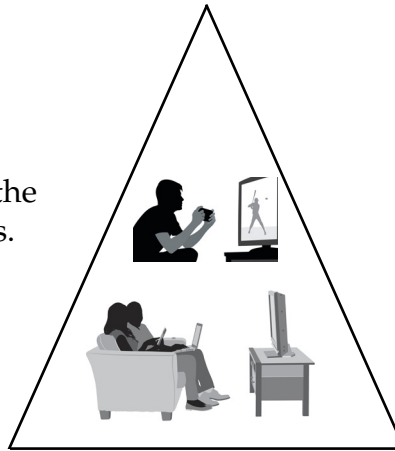
- **Every day:** Sneak in bits of exercise wherever you can. For example:
 - Use the stairs now and then instead of an elevator.
 - Walk to the mailbox instead of driving to the post office.
 - Park your car at the end of the parking lot and walk to the store.
- **3 to 5 times a week:** Do aerobic exercises such as going biking, dancing, skiing, swimming, water aerobics, walking, or playing basketball or tennis.
- **2 to 3 times a week:** Do pleasurable activities such as playing golf, going bowling or working in the garden. Do strength training such as doing abdominal crunches and push ups, yoga or lifting weights.
- **Sparingly:** Decrease the amount of time you sit watching TV, surfing the Internet and playing computer or other board games.

Weekly Activity/Exercise Pyramid

Use the weekly activity pyramid on the other side of this fact sheet to improve your physical fitness. Begin at the bottom of the pyramid and choose activities you will do every day. Gradually increase the amount of exercise and physical activities and decrease your sitting activities.

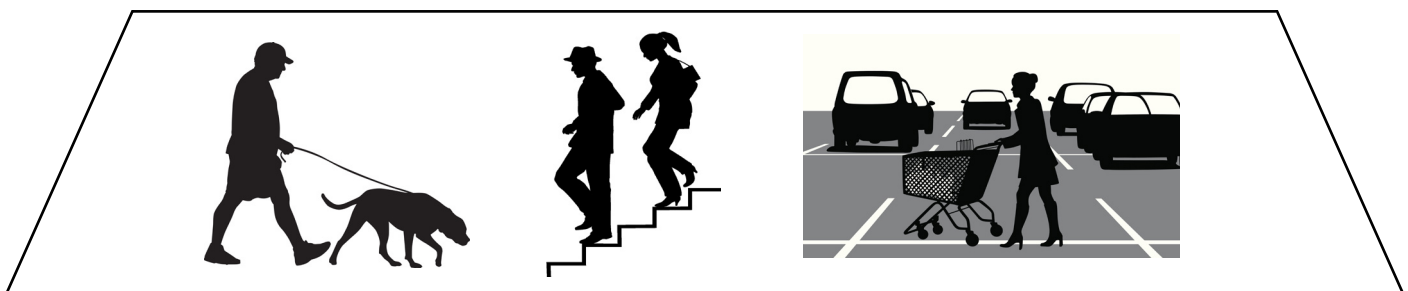
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Sparingly:
Sitting to watch TV, surf the internet and play games.



- 2-3 times a week:**
- Activities such as bowling, golf or gardening.
 - Strength training such as abdominal crunches, push ups or lifting weights.

3-5 times a week:
Activities such as biking, dancing, skiing, swimming, walking, basketball, racquetball, tennis or volleyball.



Every day:

- Take your pet for a walk.
- Use the stairs now and then instead of the elevator.
- Walk to the mailbox instead of driving to the post office.
- Park your car at the end of the parking lot and walk to the store.
- During TV or gaming breaks, walk around the house or up and down the stairs.