

# Get Regular Physical Activity For Your Good Health

## Benefits of Regular Physical Activity

Physical activity is moving your body to increase your heart rate. Being physically active is a key to living a longer, healthier, happier life. It can help relieve stress and provide an overall feeling of well-being.

Physical activity can also help you maintain a healthy weight and lower your risk for the following diseases:

- heart disease
- high blood pressure
- osteoporosis (weak, brittle bones)
- diabetes
- arthritis
- colon cancer
- anxiety and depression.

Being active increases the amount of calories your body burns. As you get older, your metabolism slows. This means your body doesn't burn calories as quickly as it used to. Maintaining a good balance means eating less and moving more.

## Types of Physical Activity

There are three basic kinds of physical activity: aerobic activities, resistance/ strength training, and balance and stretching.

- **Aerobic activities** speed your heart rate and breathing. It helps improve your heart and lung fitness. Examples include brisk walking, jogging, biking and swimming.

- **Resistance, strength training and weight-bearing activities** help build and maintain bones and muscles. Examples include lifting weights, walking, and doing push-ups and sit-ups. Give your body at least 1 day of rest between strength workouts.
- **Balance and stretching activities** enhance your stability and flexibility. Examples include gentle stretching, dancing, yoga and the martial arts. Stretch each muscle group before and after aerobic activity, strength training and weight-bearing activities. Never bounce.

## How Much Physical Activity You Need

For health benefits, you should be moderately active for at least 30 minutes a day, most days of the week.

You can break up your 30 minutes of physical activity into chunks of 10 minutes. You can take a 10-minute walk in the morning, walk up and down stairs at work for 10 minutes, and do stretching for 10 minutes before bedtime.

## Examples of Physical Activities

Moderate activities include:

- walking briskly
- hiking
- gardening/light yard work
- dancing
- playing golf  
(walking and carrying your clubs)

*(over)*

- bicycling (at least 10 mph)
- weight training.

Vigorous physical activities include:

- running/jogging (5 miles per hour)
- bicycling (more than 10 mph)
- swimming (freestyle laps)
- aerobics
- walking very fast (4 ½ mph)
- heavy yard work
- weight lifting (vigorous effort).

## How to Get Started

If you don't have a physical activity routine, you can start one. You don't need to join health clubs or buy expensive equipment — find activities you enjoy and someone to help keep you motivated!

Before you start or increase a physical activity program, or if you have a health concern, please talk with your health care provider.

## Check How Hard You Work

Once you start a physical activity, you should check how hard you are working. This is called the rate of perceived exertion. It is based on the total amount of exertion and physical fatigue you feel during an activity.

In general, activities are safe if you can do them comfortably without having any warning signs (see the next section). Use the Borg RPE scale® to rate how hard you are working.

|    |                    |
|----|--------------------|
| 6  | No exertion at all |
| 7  | Extremely light    |
| 8  |                    |
| 9  | Very light         |
| 10 |                    |
| 11 | Light              |
| 12 |                    |
| 13 | Somewhat hard      |
| 14 |                    |
| 15 | Hard (heavy)       |
| 16 |                    |
| 17 | Very hard          |
| 18 |                    |
| 19 | Extremely hard     |
| 20 | Maximal exertion   |

Borg-RPE-skalan®  
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The scale with correct instructions can be obtained from Borg Perception, see the home page: [www.borgperception.se/index.html](http://www.borgperception.se/index.html).

## When To Stop Your Activity

Stop and rest if you have any of the following symptoms:

- pain, pressure, burning or tightness in your neck, jaw, teeth, and arm, or between your shoulder blades
- dizziness or lightheadedness
- nausea (upset stomach) and vomiting (throwing up)
- cold sweat or heavy sweating
- shortness of breath making talking difficult
- unusual fatigue or exhaustion
- feelings that your heart is pounding or racing, skipping beats or has become irregular
- fainting or black-out spells
- joint or muscle pain.

If symptoms do not go away after resting, or if they keep happening, call your health care provider.