



Physical Activity— Every Move Matters

Want to look and feel your best? It can be easier than you think. Physical activity is good for everyone at every age. It's never too late to start.

Make small changes

To increase your daily activity:

- Stand at a desk while working.
- Pace while on the phone.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Park farther away from your destination.
- Walk and talk—go for a stroll in a safe location to make phone calls.
- Bike to work.
- Get outside to play with your family.

Even small increases in physical activity can:

- Reduce your risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and brittle bones (osteoporosis).
- Strengthen your heart, lungs, muscles, joints, and bones.
- Help you sleep better.

- Increase your flexibility.
- Protect against cancers, including colon, breast, and cervical.
- Help you achieve and maintain a healthy weight.
- Increase “good” cholesterol (HDL), which helps prevent heart attacks.
- Help prevent or treat depression and reduce stress.

Amount of activity needed

We recommend 150 minutes per week of moderate activity.

- Aim for 30 or more minutes a day, most days of the week.
- Try breaking your activity into 10- or 15-minute sessions instead of one long session.

If you haven't been active lately, start small—a little is better than none. Add more as you feel stronger.

Types of physical activity

Balance your workouts by including 4 types of activity every week. Start with 1 type and add on.

Burn calories and pump up your heart. Aerobic exercises (cardiovascular) build endurance and improve your mood. They raise your heart and breathing rates. Examples include:

- Brisk walking
- Jogging
- Dancing
- Swimming
- Skiing
- Hiking
- Bicycling
- Skating

Burn fat and build muscle.

Strengthening exercises tone your muscles and keep your bones strong. Examples include:

- Lifting weights or using weight training machines.
- Working with resistance bands.
- Using your body weight for resistance, such as push-ups, yoga, or Pilates.

Improve your balance. These exercises help build leg muscles, strengthen your core (abdominal muscles), and prevent falls.

Examples include:

- Walking
- Standing on one foot
- Doing tai chi, yoga, or Pilates

Move more easily. Flexibility exercises lengthen your muscles, increase range of motion, and promote circulation. Examples include:

- Stretching
- Doing yoga or Pilates

How to get started

Choose an activity you enjoy and already like or know how to do.

Make it fun:

- Exercise with a partner.
- Work out to music or with videos.
- Take a class.
- Do different activities from day to day.
- Keep a moderate pace (so you're able to talk).

Set a goal:

- Start with realistic short-term goals, such as walking half a mile or swimming for 10 minutes, 3 times per week.
- Move on to the next goal, after you feel good at your current level.

Make it happen

Schedule the time. Put your workout times in your schedule. Make physical activity an important part of your day!

Chart your progress. Write down your daily activity in a journal, on an app, or online. Note your time spent working out, how you felt before and afterwards, and your achievements.

Find a friend or partner to exercise with you. This helps you stay motivated, give each other support, and have fun together while working out.

Focus on the positive. Notice the benefits: Does exercise make you feel better, sleep better, or give you more energy? Do you feel less stressed, more confident, or stronger?

Safety notes

- Check with your doctor before starting any physical activity if you have ongoing health conditions that affect your ability to exercise.

- Don't overdo it. Notice how hard you're breathing and keep a moderate pace.
- Start and end each session with some gentle stretches.
- Stop exercising immediately if you get dizzy or faint, or feel nausea or tightness in your chest.
- Wear comfortable and appropriate shoes and clothes for the activity. If you exercise outdoors in the evening wear light-colored or reflective clothing.
- Keep one ear free, if you listen to music with earphones when you're outdoors. You need to be able to hear passing cars and other potential safety hazards.

Additional resources

For more health information, tools, classes, and other resources:

- Search [kp.org/mydoctor](https://www.kaiserpermanente.org/mydoctor)
- Contact your local Health Education Department