

Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans

This fall the Federal Government issued its first Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. It's called Be Active Your Way: A Guide for Adults. It's for adults aged 18-64 years. Here's a summary of the guidelines.

- Pick an activity that is easy to fit into your schedule. Do at least 10 minutes of physical activity at a time. Choose aerobic activities; these make your heart beat faster and make your heart, lungs, and blood vessels stronger. Also choose strengthening activities which make your muscles do more work than usual.
- Physical activity can make you feel stronger. It also improves your health.
- It's better to spread your activity throughout the week. Be active at least 3 days a week.
- To build up your activity, do a little more each time. After you are comfortable with the activity, do it more often. Then trade activities at a moderate level for more vigorous ones. Moderate and vigorous activities can be done in the same week.
- It's important to do both aerobic activities and strengthening activities.
- If you choose activities at a moderate level, do them for at least 2 hour and 30 minutes a week. Slowly increase the amount of time that you spend doing physical activity. If possible eventually increase moderate activity to 5 hours per week.
- If you choose activities at a vigorous level, do them for at least 1 hour and 15 minutes per week.
If possible increase them to 2 hours and 30 minutes per week.
- Muscle strengthening activities should be done at least 2 days a week. Include all muscle groups such as legs, hips, back, chest, stomach, shoulders, and arms. Exercises for each muscle group should be repeated 8 to 12 times per session.

Moderate Activities include:

- Ballroom and line dancing
- Biking on level ground or with few hills
- Canoeing
- General gardening (raking, trimming shrubs)
- Sports where you catch and throw (baseball, softball, volleyball)
- Tennis (doubles)
- Using a manual wheelchair
- Using hand cyclers – also called eergometers
- Walking briskly
- Water aerobics

Vigorous Activities include:

- Aerobic dance
- Biking faster than 10 miles an hour
- Fast dancing
- Heavy gardening (digging, hoeing)
- Hiking uphill
- Jumping rope
- Martial arts (such as karate)
- Race walking, jogging, or running
- Sports with a lot of running (basketball, hockey, soccer)
- Swimming fast or swimming laps
- Tennis (singles)

To get a copy of Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans go to:

www.health.gov/PAGuidelines and click on Be Active Your Way: A Guideline for Adults

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