

Excerpt from summer 2011 issue of *Your Health Matters*. [CLICK HERE](#) to view entire newsletter

Healthy Life

NEXT EXIT



The benefits of **physical activity**



Regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health. It can help:

- Control your weight
- Reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease
- Reduce your risk for type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome
- Reduce your risk of some cancers
- Strengthen your bones and muscles
- Improve your mental health and mood
- Improve your ability to do daily activities
- Increase your chances of living longer
- May reduce risk for osteoporosis and falls

Check with your health care provider

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends activities that require moderate effort, which are safe for most people. See some examples on the next two pages. But, if you have a chronic health condition such as heart disease, arthritis, diabetes, etc., be sure to talk with your health care provider about the types and amounts of physical activity that are right for you.

Types of physical activity

Moderate-intensity aerobic activity

You are working hard enough to raise your heart rate and break a sweat. One way to tell is that you will be able to talk, but not sing the words to your favorite song. Here are some examples of activities that require moderate effort:

- Walking fast
- Washing windows or floors
- Pushing a lawn mower
- Washing a car

Vigorous-intensity aerobic activity

You are breathing hard and fast, and your heart rate has gone up quite a bit. If you are working at this level, you will not be able to say more than a few words without pausing for a breath. Here are some examples of activities that require vigorous effort:

- Jogging or running
- Swimming laps
- Playing basketball
- Riding a bike fast or up hills

Muscle-strengthening activities

These activities should work all the major muscle groups of your body (legs, hips, back, chest, abdomen, shoulders, and arms). To gain health benefits, muscle-strengthening activities need to be done to the point where it is hard for you to do another repetition without help. Here are some examples of muscle-strengthening activities:

- Lifting weights (e.g., using cans of food as weights)
- Working with resistance bands
- Doing exercises that use your body weight for resistance (e.g., push-ups, sit-ups, pull-ups)
- Heavy gardening (e.g., digging, shoveling)



**Moderate-intensity
aerobic activity**

Definitions



Muscle-strengthening activities



Aerobic activity or “cardio”:

You will breathe harder and your heart will beat faster. As long as you are doing an activity at a moderate or vigorous intensity for at least 10 minutes at a time.

Intensity:

How hard your body is working during an activity.

Metabolism:

A collection of chemical reactions that takes place in the body’s cells. Metabolism converts the fuel in the food we eat into the energy needed to power everything we do, from moving to thinking to growing.

Repetition:

One complete movement of an activity, like lifting a weight or doing a sit-up. Try to do 8–12 repetitions per activity that count as 1 set. Try to do at least 1 set of muscle-strengthening activities, but to gain even more benefits, do 2 or 3 sets.

Vigorous-intensity aerobic activity



Resources used for 2011 Your Health Matters’ Summer Insert:
www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/physical_activity/;
www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/adults.html;
www.kidshealth.org/teen/your_body/body_basics/metabolism.html

Have you thought about becoming more active, but you do not know where to start?

Take this quiz to learn more about how to get physically fit and to lead a healthy lifestyle.

Questions

- 1. True/ False** It is important to include some kind of aerobic work in the activities that you choose to do.
- 2. True/ False** Working out with weights is too tough for older people.
- 3. True/ False** Stretching can help prevent falls.
- 4. True/ False** Whatever activity you choose, start out slowly and then start working harder.
- 5. True/ False** Always talk to your health care provider before starting a new workout program.



Getting active:
**Take the
quiz**

Answers

- 1. True.** Activities such as walking, swimming and dancing increase your heart rate and breathing. This will help make you healthier.
- 2. False.** Weight training can build muscles and help prevent osteoporosis. Weight training also helps keep your weight and blood sugar under control.
- 3. True.** Stretching keeps you flexible and limber.
- 4. True.** If you try to do too much too soon, you can get hurt. Instead, build up your workouts slowly.
- 5. True.** Your health care provider may want to give you an exam to assess your health. Your health care provider may be able to suggest activities that are best for you. Talk to your health care provider today and start getting physically fit.