Physical Activity is for Everyone

Why should I care and what should I do?

Each week, try to increase your physical activity. Use the Activity Pyramid for ideas.

Guidelines for the Activity Pyramid by the US Department of Health and Human Services.

Download a printable PDF with tips -
Benefits of Regular Physical Activity

- Higher activity and fitness levels are associated with lower death rates from heart disease, colon cancer and Type II Diabetes.
- Our bodies were designed for movement and inactivity causes health problems that get worse with time.
- Activity programs can be started at any time with any body type or disease state present.

Benefits of Regular Physical Activity:

- Reduction of heart disease risk factors because of the:
  - Decrease in blood pressure
  - Increase in good cholesterol or HDL
  - Decrease in triglycerides
  - Decrease in total body fat
  - Decrease in abdominal fat

- With increased exercise tolerance and you will have:
  - Less fatigue overall
  - Less shortness of breath at lower activity levels
  - Increased weight loss
  - Reduced insulin needs
  - Maintained muscle mass

Some Barriers to Physical Activity

- Physical
  - Medical conditions
  - Low cardiovascular endurance
  - Low flexibility
  - Increased perception of exertion and pain

- Psychological
  - Depression
  - Low self esteem
  - Poor body image
  - Lack of support

- Economical
  - Facility or gym costs
- Equipment costs
- Apparel or footwear costs
- Child care costs

- **Personal**
  - Lack of time
  - Not convenient
  - Not enjoyable

- **Not sure how to get started**
  - Unsure of the kinds of programs available
  - Not sure if you can do the work
  - Not sure of how to set goals
  - Not sure if equipment will support current weight
  - Not sure of how to use equipment

---

**Tips to Get Started:**

1. **Develop Physical Activity Programs**
   - Physical activity is just one part.
     - Consider programs with a multidisciplinary approach
   - Discuss and establish realistic goals
     - Take into account health and safety concerns
   - Determine how smaller goals fit into bigger goals
   - Develop strategies to reduce your barriers
   - Develop social supports
   - Make it your own
     - Everyone is unique and requires a unique program
     - What are your favorite activities – traditional, land or water, cardiovascular, strength training?

2. **Plan your Physical Activity**
   - Intensity
     - How hard should I be exercising?
       - Take the talk test- you should be able to speak in short phrases but not sing along to your music.
   - Frequency
     - How many times should I exercise in a week?
       - At least 3 days per week but more if you feel good doing it.
• Duration
  o How long should I exercise?
    ▪ At least 30 minutes. This can be 30 minutes in a row our you can break it down into smaller chunks of time.

3. Go Do it.
• Each Physical Activity Event Cycle should include
  o Warm up
  o Cardiovascular – get the heart rate up
  o Musculoskeletal – stretch and get strong
  o Cool down

4. Keep it going
• Enlist support of a friend or family member
• Try a something new
• Consider walking laps around a mall
• Walk laps around your home and include stairs if possible.
• Start a stretching (yoga) program
• Start strengthening using dumb bells, resistance bands or even soup cans in your home
• House work can be a physical activity – wash the floors, dust, vacuum
• If exercising outside then consider the weather – dress in layers

Warm up and Cool Down Activities – repeat each activity 5 times

• Overhead Reach
  o Reach and stretch one arm straight over your head
  o Repeat with the other arm

• Shoulder Shrugs
  o Lift shoulders up to ears
  o Push shoulders down
  o Leave arms relaxed at sides

• Head and Neck Stretch
  o Slowly move left ear to left shoulder and hold
  o Slowly move right ear to the right shoulder and hold
  o Slowly move chin to chest and hold

• Trunk Stretch
- Put your feet shoulder width apart for balance
- Bend the knees slightly
- Bend at the hips, moving the body to the right side and hold
- Bend at the hips moving the body to the left and hold

- **Arm and shoulder circles**
  - Slowly circle arms starting with small circles and progressing to larger circles
  - Challenge yourself but do not cause pain

- **Forward arm lifts**
  - Lift arms from your waist to your shoulder level, in front, with palms facing down

- **Backward arm pushes**
  - Push arms behind you with palms facing up to the point of tension but not pain

- **Leg lifts**
  - Keep body straight
  - Lift one leg forward, then to side, then back then across the front
  - Move leg to point of tension not pain
  - Repeat with the other leg

- **Hamstring stretch**
  - Carefully sit on the edge of a chair
  - Extend one leg out forward
  - Keep the other leg bent with foot on the floor
  - With arms, reach forward toward extended leg to point of tension, not pain
  - Hold 15-30 seconds
  - Repeat on other leg

- **Ankles**
  - Point and flex foot
  - Circle foot to the right (clockwise) and to the left (counter clockwise)

- **Calf Stretch**
  - Extend one leg behind you, press that heal into floor
  - Knee of front leg bent for support
  - Hold 15-30 seconds
  - Repeat on other leg

- **Knee Bends**
  - Put your feet shoulder width apart for balance
  - Keep heals on floor and body straight
  - Bend and straighten at the knees
You are never too big to do some kind of exercise

- Your body needs exercise in the same way it needs food.
- No matter how overweight you are start with some form of exercise to begin the process of decreasing fat, strengthening your bones, and relieving joint pain!