
The Importance of Physical Activity

Why stay active?

Physical activity helps you stay healthy and has both short-term and long-term benefits.

❖ Short-term health benefits

- Helps you sleep better (better quality)
- Lowers anxiety and stress
- Lowers blood pressure

❖ Long-term health benefits

- Lowers the risk of falls
- Helps you stay independent as you get older
- Builds strong bones
- Supports heart health
- Supports brain health
- Can help prevent cancer
- Helps with weight control

Types of Physical Activities

There are two main types of physical activities: Unscheduled & Scheduled

❖ Unscheduled activities

- Carrying groceries
- Walking your pet
- Yard work
- Taking the stairs (instead of the elevator)

❖ Scheduled activities

- Walking or biking
- Dance classes
- Water aerobics
- Strength exercises (like bodyweight squats or push-ups)
- Stretching or yoga

How Much Physical Activity Is Recommended?

Aim for at least 150 minutes per week of moderate activity (about 20–30 minutes per day). Try to do strength or resistance training activities at least two days per week.

Plan ways to stay active during the day!

Doing small activities during the day can make it easier to stay active. Doing gentle stretches before bed can help you relax, reduce muscle tightness, and prepare for sleep.

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- **Morning Wake-Up Stretch** (do each for 15–60 seconds; repeat 3-4 times)
 - Neck rotations
 - Shoulder rolls
 - Hamstring and calf stretches
 - Hip circles
 - **Mid-Day Workout** (do each for 30-60 seconds; repeat one more time)
 - March in place
 - Sit-to-stands (stand up from a chair)
 - Side leg lifts
 - Calf raises
 - Biceps curls with light weights or soup cans
 - **Stretches** (hold each for 15–30 seconds; repeat 2 times)
 - Overhead stretch
 - Side bend and reach
 - Calf stretch
 - Forward bend
 - **Night Stretch** (hold for 15-60 seconds; repeat 2-4 times)
 - Seated spinal twist
 - Ear to shoulder neck stretch
 - Cat and cow pose

Get creative!

Try to move your body in new ways and whenever possible. Here are some ideas.

- Arrive early to an appointment and walk inside or around the building
- Walk laps inside the grocery store before you start shopping
- Take several trips placing groceries bags in your home
- Walk around when on a phone call
- Do 10 squats while your tea or coffee brews
- Do 10 wall push-ups or high knee raises watching TV
- Listen to music and vacuum for 10 minutes
- Pull weeds or water plants for 10 minutes
- Park farther away when running errands
- Clean the inside or outside of your car for 10 minutes
- Do heel raises while brushing your teeth
- Play music and dance while you clean your house
- Practice standing on one foot, then alternate
- Walk a local nature trail, explore a park, or the beach