

The **BENEFITS** of *Regular Physical Activity*

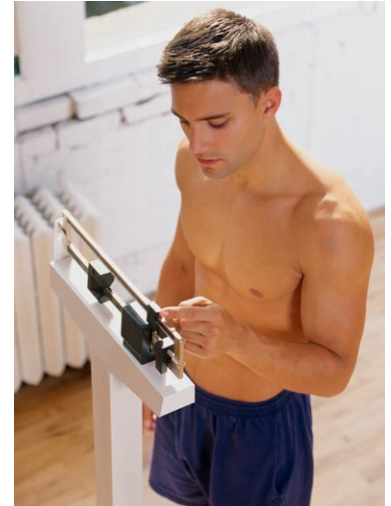
Taking part in regular physical activity will make you feel better, look better, increase your endurance, and prevent adverse health conditions.

Good health doesn't just happen. It is the result of healthy living each day. According to recommendations from the American College of Sports Medicine and the American Heart Association, **"Every adult should accumulate 30 minutes or more of moderate-intensity physical activity on most, preferably all, days of the week."**



Mood

Regular physical activity decreases feelings of anxiety and depression. It enhances mood and helps you feel happier. This may be due partly to the affect of chemicals released in the brain when you exercise.



Weight Management

Your body's ability to burn calories is highly influenced by your level of physical activity and the amount of muscle produced as a result of regular exercise. As muscle mass increases, your body can burn calories more efficiently.

Cardiovascular Disease

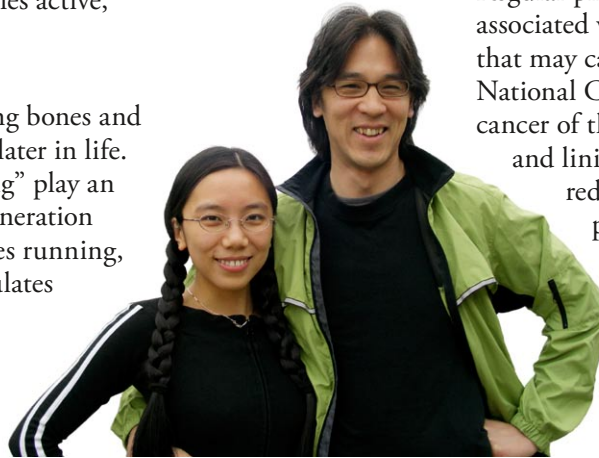
Regular physical activity protects against the development of cardiovascular disease and stroke, and helps to control other factors that may put a person at increased risk, including high blood pressure, high blood lipid levels, insulin resistance, and obesity.

Strength

Regular physical activity helps keep muscles active, maintaining – if not building – strength.

Bone Health

Regular physical activity helps build strong bones and also protects bones from becoming weak later in life. Activities considered to be "weight bearing" play an especially important role in the bone regeneration process. Any physical activity that includes running, jumping, walking, or weight-lifting stimulates bones to rebuild more rapidly, helping to prevent osteoporosis – a thinning of the bones.



Cancer

Regular physical activity has been associated with a reduction in risk factors that may cause cancer. According to the National Cancer Institute, the risk of cancer of the breast, colon, prostate, lung, and lining of the uterus may all be reduced by engaging in regular physical activity.

Fill in the box below to help you clarify your priorities.

Reasons I want to be fit:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Tips to Help You Reach Your Fitness Goal

- Choose activities you enjoy.** By choosing activities that you enjoy, you will be more likely to stick with them. Add new activities every few weeks to help yourself stay motivated.
- Start with small steps.** Set goals that challenge you but that you are confident you can accomplish.
- Log your progress daily.** It helps to keep you on track – and seeing progress is motivating!
- Gradually increase the time spent doing an activity.** Adding a few minutes to your physical activity every day or week, will help you reach the recommended minimum of 30 minutes of physical activity per day in no time!
- Reevaluate your progress often.** Do more of what is working. If something isn't working, try a new approach.
- Vary your activities.** This will help hold your interest, and broaden the range of benefits. Try exploring new activities on a regular basis.
- Be optimistic.** Think positively. You can do it!
- Enlist an exercise buddy.** Having someone to exercise with will help you to maintain your self-discipline and make exercise more fun.

Tips for People Who Have Been Inactive for a While

If...	Then...
You do not currently engage in regular physical activity	Begin by incorporating a few minutes of physical activity into each day, gradually building up to 30 minutes or more of moderate-intensity activities, such as walking.
You are now active, but less than the recommended levels	Try to be more consistent: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Aim for moderate-intensity physical activity for 30 minutes or more on 5 or more days of the week, or ■ Choose vigorous-intensity physical activity for 20 minutes or more on 3 or more days of the week.
You currently engage in moderate-intensity activities for at least 30 minutes on 5 or more days of the week	You may achieve even greater health benefits by increasing the time spent or intensity of those activities.
You currently engage in vigorous-intensity activities 20 minutes or more on 3 or more days of the week	Keep up the good work. Add new activities occasionally to keep your fitness program interesting.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Examples of Moderate Activities

- **Walking briskly**, 3-4 mph
- **Mowing lawn**, walking behind a power mower
- **Badminton**, continual play
- **Basketball**, casual
- **Bicycling** on the flat, easy pace, 10-11 mph
- **Ballroom dancing**
- **Golf**, walking, pulling clubs
- **Swimming laps**, moderate pace
- **Table tennis**
- **Tennis**, doubles
- **Volleyball**, non-competitive



Examples of Vigorous Activities

- **Walking at a very fast pace**, 4.5+ mph
- **Hiking briskly** up a grade with a light pack
- **Backpacking** on steep grades with a 30-40 lb pack
- **Jogging**, 8-12 min/mile pace
- **Basketball**, competitive game
- **Bicycling** on the flat, 12-16 mph
- **Skiing cross-country**, 2.5-5 mph
- **Soccer**
- **Volleyball**, competitive

Your Fitness Goal

Circle the days you will exercise each week:

SUN MON TUES WED THURS FRI SAT

Choose Your Intensity of Exercise

- Moderate** – At a moderate intensity, a person should be able to comfortably carry on a conversation while participating in the activity. The activity should feel fairly easy to somewhat hard.
- Vigorous** – A person taking part in vigorous activity will still be able to talk, but will find conversation difficult due to heavy breathing. There will be a large increase in your heart rate, and you'll feel like you're working hard at your exercise.

List a few activities you will enjoy doing:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____