

Getting More Active—for People Without Chronic Disease

How Activity Helps

Activity does many good things for us:

- It helps delay or control chronic diseases.
- It makes us leaner.
- It strengthens our hearts.
- It makes us stronger and produces better balance.
- It makes us stay young longer.
- It helps relieve stress.

How To Add Activity

Many people think that only strenuous activity is helpful, but that is not true. Just being more active can make a difference. Some things you can do are:

- Gardening
- Walking a dog
- Playing with children
- Walking to do errands
- Raking the lawn
- Taking the stairs

List other ways you can be more active: _____

Beginning an Exercise Program

- Before beginning a formal exercise program, talk to your doctor. The doctor may want to give you a physical before you begin. Then choose an activity you like.
- Begin with a 5- to 10-minute session.
- Slowly work up to your goal. Usually, 30–45 minutes of aerobic activity is enough. For best results, do it 5 or more days a week. The minimum is 3 days a week.

- Schedule your exercise time on your calendar. You are more likely to do it if you make it a priority.
- Do different activities, so you won't get bored.
- Exercise with a partner.

Exercising Safely

- Wear white or colorful clothing if you will exercise at night or near traffic.
- **Wear sunscreen during daylight hours, especially between 10 am and 2pm and wear a hat if you will be outside.**
- Do not exercise if it is too hot or too cold.
- Wear clothing and shoes that are made of natural fibers like cotton and wool.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Stretch only after you are warmed up with aerobic activity such as slow walking. Stretching when muscles are cold may hurt them. You should stretch every day.
- Carry identification in case you become ill or have an accident.
- Carry an emergency phone number and money to make a call if needed.

Strength Training

Strength training can keep you feeling **stronger and more active**. It helps maintain muscle tone and improves balance. It does raise the blood pressure, so talk to your doctor to be sure it is right for you.

Don't lift too much too fast. Lift slowly and with good posture. Give yourself at least 24–48 hours between training sessions to allow your muscles to recover and get stronger.

Answer These Questions

1. Do I want to start a regular exercise program? Yes/No

2. What exercises do I think I can do and would I enjoy? _____

3. When can I schedule an appointment to talk with my doctor about this? _____

4. With whom can I exercise? _____

5. What do I need to do before I start? _____

6. What are my exercise goals? _____

How long? _____

How often? _____

How intense? _____