

## **Be Physically Active**

Visit our Website: [modep-life.org](http://modep-life.org)

For more information  
(716) 616-0116  
Email: [modep.buffalo@gmail.com](mailto:modep.buffalo@gmail.com)



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## **The Health Education Network**



**The Health Education Network is a Program of the Minority Organ Donation Education Program, Inc.**

**Do you feel that you can barely do any activity at all? That you cannot exercise, play sports, or become fit?**

Very large people face special challenges in trying to be active. You may not be able to bend or move in the same way that other people can. It may be hard to find clothes and equipment for exercising. You may feel self-conscious being physically active around other people. Facing these challenges is hard, but it can be done!

Being physically active may help you live longer and protect you from:

- Diabetes
- Heart disease and stroke
- High blood pressure
- Osteoporosis (a disease leading to weak bones that may break easily)

If you have any of these health problems, being physically active may help control or improve your symptoms.

Regular physical activity helps you feel better because it:

- Lowers your stress and boosts your mood
- Increases your strength
- Helps control blood pressure and blood sugar
- Helps build healthy bones, muscles, and joints
- Helps your heart and lungs work better
- Improves your self-esteem.

**Source: National Institutes of Health**

### Walking (weight bearing)

The walking that you do during the day (like doing chores around the house or in the yard) can help you be more fit. But regular, steady walking that makes you breathe heavier can help you to be healthier. It will give your heart and lungs as well as your leg muscles a good workout.

If you are not active now, start slowly. Try to walk 5 minutes a day for the first week. Walk 8 minutes the next week. Stay at 8-minute walks until you feel comfortable. Then increase your walks to 11 minutes. Slowly lengthen each walk by 3 minutes or walk faster.

#### Tips for walking:

- Wear comfortable walking shoes with a lot of support. If you walk often, you may need to buy new shoes every 6 to 8 months.
- Wear garments that prevent inner thigh chafing, such as tights or spandex shorts.
- Make walking fun. Walk with a friend or pet. Walk in places you enjoy, like a park or shopping mall.

### Lifestyle Activities

Lifestyle physical activities do not have to be planned. You can make small changes to make your day more physically active and improve your health. For example:

- Take 2- to 3-minute walking breaks at work a few times a day.
- Put away the TV remote control get up to change the channel.
- March in place during TV commercials.

- Sit in a rocking chair and push off the floor with your feet.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.

Doing chores like lawn mowing, leaf raking, gardening, and housework may also improve your health.

### Wear the right clothes:

1. Wear lightweight, loose fitting tops so you can move easily.
2. Wear clothes made of fabrics that absorb sweat and remove it from your skin.
3. Never wear rubber or plastic suits. Plastic suits could hold the sweat on your skin and make your body overheat.
4. Women should wear a good support bra.
5. Wear supportive athletic shoes for weight-bearing activities.
6. Wear a knit hat to keep you warm when you are physically active outdoors in cold weather. Wear a tightly woven, wide-brimmed hat in hot weather to help keep you cool and protect you from the sun.
7. Wear sunscreen when you are physically active outdoors.

Healthy, fit bodies come in all sizes.

***Whatever your size or shape, get physically active now and keep moving for a healthier life!***

**See your doctor before starting any exercise program**