

Exercise 101

Exercise Your Option to Be Well

There are many benefits to regular exercise. It can help keep your [digestive system](#) as well as your [joints and muscles](#) in good working order. It helps [manage stress](#) and contributes to [cardiometabolic health](#). It can help burn calories if you're trying to [manage your weight](#). Plus, moving your body just feels great. The important thing is to do something you like: biking, hiking, dancing, fitness DVDs/classes, or whatever recreational activity sounds like fun!

Get Started and Get Moving

If you've been relatively inactive, consider starting with 30 minutes of brisk walking 5 days a week. It's best to begin your walking program on level pathways. When you feel ready, try to walk up some hills to help your body burn calories faster. Over time, increase your pace and distance, but only if you feel comfortable doing so. To increase muscle mass and tone your body, consider adding a monitored strength training program. And don't forget to stretch before and after any exercise activity to improve flexibility and aid muscle recovery.

How Much Exercise is Enough?

American Heart Association guidelines recommend

- 2½ hours of moderate-intensity per week — that's 30 minutes per day 5 days a week, OR
- 1 hour, 15 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity per week — that's 15 minutes per day, 5 days a week

Find the Hidden Exercise

Did you know that some everyday tasks can be considered exercise? Activities like cleaning house, working in the yard, climbing stairs, playing interactive video games, doing stationary exercises or simply parking farther away from your destination can all be beneficial.