

Physical Activity for a Healthy Weight

ESPAÑOL

Why is physical activity important?

Regular physical activity provides immediate and long-term [health benefits](#). Being physically active can improve your brain health, reduce the risk of disease, strengthen bones and muscles, and improve your ability to do everyday activities.

Physical activity also helps:

- Improve sleep quality.
- Reduce high blood pressure.
- Reduce risk for type 2 diabetes, heart attack, stroke, and [several forms of cancer](#).
- Reduce arthritis pain and associated disability.
- Reduce risk for osteoporosis and falls.
- Reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety.

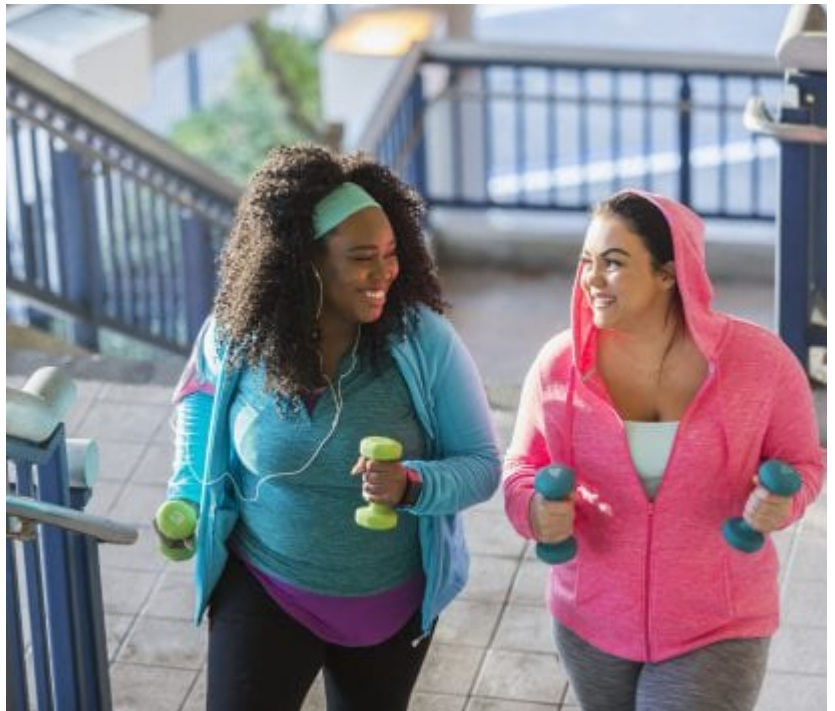
In addition, physical activity is important if you are trying to lose weight or maintain a healthy weight.

- When losing weight, more physical activity increases the number of calories your body uses for energy. Using calories through physical activity, combined with reducing the calories you eat, creates a calorie deficit that results in weight loss.
- Most weight loss occurs from decreasing caloric intake. However, evidence shows the only way to *maintain* weight loss is to be engaged in regular physical activity.
- Most importantly, physical activity reduces risks of cardiovascular disease and diabetes beyond that produced by weight reduction alone.

How much physical activity do I need?

To maintain your weight: Work your way up to 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week. This could be brisk walking 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week. Or you could do 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity each week, such as swimming laps.

The exact amount of physical activity needed to maintain a healthy weight varies greatly from person to person. You may need more than the equivalent of 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity a week to maintain your weight.



To lose weight and keep it off: You will need a high amount of physical activity unless you also adjust your diet to reduce the number of calories you eat and drink. Getting to and staying at a healthy weight requires both regular physical activity and a healthy eating plan.

What do moderate- and vigorous-intensity mean?

Moderate: While performing the physical activity, if your breathing and heart rate is noticeably faster but you can still carry on a conversation — it's probably moderately intense. Examples include:

- Walking briskly (a 15-minute mile).
- Light yard work (raking/bagging leaves or using a lawn mower).
- Light snow shoveling.
- Actively playing with children.
- Biking at a casual pace.

Vigorous: If your heart rate is increased substantially and you are breathing too hard and fast to have a conversation, it's probably vigorously intense. Examples include:

- Jogging/running.
- Swimming laps.
- Rollerblading/inline skating at a brisk pace.

- Cross-country skiing.
- Most competitive sports (football, basketball, or soccer).
- Jumping rope.

How many calories are used in typical activities?

The following table shows calories used in common physical activities at both moderate and vigorous levels.

Calories Used per Hour in Common Physical Activities		
Moderate Physical Activity	Approximate Calories/30 Minutes for a 154 lb Person ¹	Approximate Person ¹
Hiking	185	
Light gardening/yard work	165	
Dancing	165	
Golf (walking and carrying clubs)	165	
Bicycling (<10 mph)	145	
Walking (3.5 mph)	140	
Weight lifting (general light workout)	110	
Stretching	90	
Vigorous Physical Activity	Approximate Calories/30 Minutes for a 154 lb Person ¹	Approximate Person ¹
Running/jogging (5 mph)	295	
Bicycling (>10 mph)	295	
Swimming (slow freestyle laps)	255	

Calories Used per Hour in Common Physical Activities		
Aerobics	240	
Walking (4.5 mph)	230	
Heavy yard work (chopping wood)	220	
Weight lifting (vigorous effort)		
Basketball (vigorous)	220	
¹ Calories burned per hour will be higher for persons who weigh more than 154 lbs (70 kg) weigh less. Source: Adapted from Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005, page 16, Table 1		

To help estimate the intensity of your physical activity, see [Physical Activity for Everyone: Measuring Physical Activity Intensity](#).

Want to learn more?,

[Getting Started with Physical Activity for a Healthy Weight](#) - If you’ve not been physically active in a while, you may be wondering how to get started again. Lace up those sneakers and find some motivating ideas.

For general Physical Activity information, see [Physical Activity for Everyone](#)

Article Source

Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

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