

# How Much Exercise Do I Need?

## Summary

Regular exercise is one of the best things you can do for your health. It has many [benefits](#). It can improve your overall health and fitness and reduce your risk for many chronic diseases. To get the most benefit, here's how much physical activity you should get:

### For adults:

**Get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity each week. Or you could do a combination of the two.**

- Try to spread your physical activity out over several days of the week. That's better than trying to do it all in one or two days.
- Some days you may not have long blocks of time to do physical activity. You can try splitting it up into segments of ten minutes or more.
- Aerobic activities include walking fast, jogging, swimming, and biking
- Moderate intensity means that while you are doing that activity, you should be able to say a few words in a row but not sing
- Vigorous intensity means that while you are doing that activity, you won't be able to say more than a few words without stopping for a breath

**Also, do strengthening activities twice per week.**

- Strengthening activities include lifting weights, working with exercise bands, and doing sit-ups and pushups
- Choose activities that work all the different parts of the body - your legs, hips, back, chest, stomach, shoulders, and arms. You should repeat exercises for each muscle group 8 to 12 times per session.

### For preschool-aged children (ages 3-5):

**Preschool children should be physically active throughout the day, to help with their growth and development.**

They should get both structured and unstructured active play. Structured play has a goal and is directed by an adult. Examples include playing a sport or a game. Unstructured play is creative free play, such as playing on a playground.

### For children and teens:

**Get 60 minutes or more of physical activity every day. Most of it should be moderate-intensity aerobic activity.**

- Activities should vary and be a good fit for the child's age and physical development
- Moderate-intensity aerobic activities include walking, running, skipping, playing on the playground, playing basketball, and biking

**Also, try to get each of these at least 3 days a week: vigorous-intensity aerobic activity, muscle-strengthening activity, and bone-strengthening activity.**

- Vigorous-intensity aerobic activities include running, doing jumping jacks, and fast swimming
- Muscle-strengthening activities include playing on playground equipment, playing tug-of-war, and doing pushups and pull-ups
- Bone-strengthening activities include hopping, skipping, doing jumping jacks, playing volleyball, and working with resistance bands

**For older adults, pregnant women, and people with chronic health problems:**

[Older adults](#), pregnant women, and people who have special health needs should check with their health care provider on how much physical activity they should get and what types of activities they should do.

**Exercise tips:**

People who are trying to lose weight may need to get more physical activity. They also need to adjust their diet, so they are burning more calories than they eat and drink.

If you have been inactive, you may need to start slowly. You can keep adding more gradually. The more you can do, the better. But try not to feel overwhelmed, and do what you can. Getting some physical activity is always better than getting none.

*NIH: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute*