

Choosing and Starting an Exercise Program

U.S. Surgeon General's Recommendation

Every U.S. adult should engage in physical activity for 30 minutes on most days of the week with a goal of 180 minutes of moderate-intensity activity each week. The 30 minutes can be accumulated over the course of the day in shorter increments.

Examples

Here are some examples of moderate-intensity activity:

- Washing and waxing a car for 45 to 60 minutes
- Washing windows or floors for 45 to 60 minutes
- Gardening for 35 to 40 minutes
- Wheeling self in wheelchair for 30 to 40 minutes
- Walking 2 miles in 30 minutes
- Swimming laps or doing water aerobics for 20 minutes
- Stair walking for 15 minutes

Tips

Any time you are exercising, you should follow these safety tips:

- Wear sturdy shoes with ankle support
- Drink plenty of water — 8 ounces before and after
- Wear non-binding clothing
- Avoid exercising in temperature or humidity extremes
- Exercise with a partner, if possible
- Consider walking indoors in a mall if you are concerned about safety
- **Stop** exercising immediately if you experience any of the following — chest pain or tightness, shortness of breath, dizziness or lightheadedness, palpitations

How to Start

If you are new to regular exercise, consider the following schedule. Try walking 10 minutes every day at a pace that lets you talk to your partner for one week, then increase by 5 minutes a week until you are walking 30 minutes or more per day.

Talk to your personal physician to determine your need for formal cardiopulmonary stress testing prior to starting on an exercise regimen.

Disclaimer: *This information is not intended as a substitute for professional care. Your physician should be consulted for personalized information.*