

# Living Right<sup>®</sup>

Your Health and Wellness Awareness Bulletin

June 2016

Exercise

## Exercise to boost your mood, quality of life

When you are feeling down, exercise may not be on your priority list. Once you start moving, however, you may find that activity makes you happier and helps you cope with life's challenges.



Improved mental health, including sharpened thinking, learning, and judgment skills, can result from 30 to 60 minutes of aerobic activity three to five times a week, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. These mental health benefits also come from a mixture of aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities.

When you're physically active, your body makes certain chemicals, called endorphins, which help relieve stress and lift your mood. Exercise has been known to help individuals with depression, sleep problems, and trouble with concentration.

Additionally, physical activity can help improve your quality of life by helping you:

**Improve self-confidence:** You may feel better about how you look when you are physically fit, and it's rewarding to reach fitness goals.

**Manage problems:** Physical activity is a healthy outlet for frustrations, and a useful mechanism in handling life's hurdles. Going for a run, swimming, or playing a game of tennis can help you better cope with stress and may take your mind off your troubles.

**Control negative thoughts:** Activity can help ease worrisome thoughts that can trigger anxiety.

**Socialize:** A walk, run, fitness class, or team-based activity can all be enjoyed with a friend.

## Dance, row, go: Check out these fitness trends

Looking to add something new to your exercise routine? One of these fitness trends might be just what you need to spice things up:

**Pound:** Use weighted drumsticks in this cardiovascular workout.

**Bolly:** An aerobic workout inspired by Bollywood dance, derived from classical Indian styles.

**Zumba step:** Combine Zumba dance moves with an aerobic step workout.

**Rowing:** An old friend is getting a new look as a high intensity, low-impact, full-body workout.



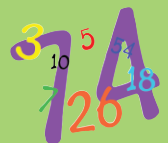
## Exercise by the numbers

**150** The number of minutes of moderately intense aerobic activity adults should get weekly. For greater benefits, strive for five hours of moderate or 150 minutes of vigorous activity each week.

**10** The minimum number of minutes you should be moving when you want the benefits of moderate or intense aerobic exercise.

**2** The number of days each week adults should do muscle-strengthening activities that work all major muscle groups.

If you have a heart problem, arthritis, diabetes, or another health condition, talk to your doctor about how much activity you should strive for, and the types of activities that are right for you.



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

## Benefit from exercise bursts

If getting 150 minutes of aerobic exercise each week sounds like too much for your busy schedule, try breaking that number down.

Ten-minute increments of exercise throughout the day can be just as beneficial as a longer exercise session.

Take a 10-minute jog before work, or walk on your lunch hour. Stop for a brief hike through the park on the way home, or take a bike ride with the kids after dinner.



Try to fit activity into your work day whenever possible. Take the stairs more often, stand when you're on the phone, or have a walking meeting.

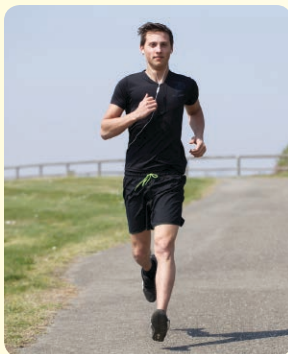


## Find the right activity for you

Physical activity doesn't have to mean joining a gym or walking on a treadmill. To find an exercise routine that you can stick with, find an enjoyable activity that fits into your lifestyle.

When looking for activities, consider:

- Do you prefer exercising alone, with a friend, or in a group? If you're self-motivated, solo exercises such as swimming might be for you. Running can be done alone or with a friend. Fitness classes and team sports are great ways to add a social component to exercise. For variety, try a mixture of options.
- What types of activities are best suited to your lifestyle? Consider your amount of free time, physical abilities, and budget. Walking is one of the most inexpensive exercise options – a good pair of shoes is all that's needed.
- What activities did you enjoy as a child? Basketball, biking, or swimming may be activities you can take up again.
- Do you prefer being indoors or outside? Hiking and biking are great options for those who love the outdoors. Gyms offer exercise equipment options and numerous classes for those who prefer indoor activity.
- What time of day is best? A morning person might want to get up 30 minutes earlier than usual to exercise, while a night owl might prefer to stop at the gym right after work.
- How about making it a family affair? Walking the dog, taking a bike ride as a family, tossing a ball with the kids, or playing an active video game are a few ways to incorporate activity into your day.
- What are your health and fitness goals? Are you trying to lose weight or lower your cholesterol? Talk to your doctor or a health coach to determine the best way to meet your goals.



## Create your own workout

If you're short on time, but still want to fit some moderate or vigorous exercise into your day, create your own 10-minute workout.

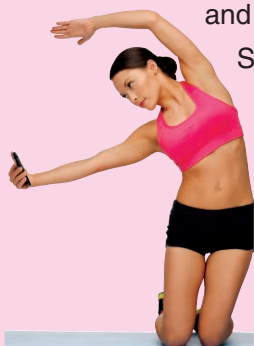
Try any or all of the exercises below for 20 seconds to one minute at a time, alternating them to suit your taste and desired activity level. You may need a brief rest between exercises. No equipment is needed.

- Jumping jacks
- Star jacks (jump off the ground)
- Lunges
- Run in place, with high knees
- Plank
- Plank jacks (jump feet in and out)
- Climbing and descending stairs
- Squats
- Pushups
- Burpees/squat thrusts (squat, hands down, feet back to plank, jump back to squat, jump up with hands over head)



## Stretch to improve flexibility

Stretching can be an enjoyable and valuable part of your exercise routine. Not only does it feel great after a workout, it can improve your range of motion and help muscles stay limber.



Stretching before a workout is no longer recommended, as it may not be beneficial. Instead, send oxygen to your muscles by warming up with some easy movements, such as a light jog. After five or 10 minutes, muscles will be ready for stretching.

You can also save stretching for the end of your workout. Use smooth movements, and hold each stretch for about 30 to 60 seconds. Expect to feel tension, but not pain.

Incorporate stretching into your workout routine by practicing yoga or tai chi, which can also improve balance.

Next month:  
Water



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