



# NAVIGATE

## Steering you to a healthy, vibrant life

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## Fitness and physical activity

Fitness means being able to perform physical activity. Maintaining physical fitness through daily activity can help you feel better, function better, sleep better, and reduce the risk of a number of chronic diseases, such as heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and blood pressure.<sup>1</sup> Physical activity can also increase flexibility to help with some medical conditions. When you stay active and fit, you burn more calories, even when you're at rest. It can also help you manage your weight.

You don't have to be an athlete to be fit. Benefits come from even a brisk 30 minute walk each day, and benefits also include small ten minute sessions of activity. Even better, the benefits begin immediately after starting to exercise. Research shows everyone gains the benefits of being fit and active; people of all genders, ages, healthy people and those living with chronic conditions or disabilities.

If certain activities such as vigorous running or strength training are hard for you, think of other ways to get physically activity that you enjoy. Work with your doctor to determine the best way to get started on an exercise plan.

The activities you choose depend on which kind of fitness you want to improve.

- **Aerobic fitness** makes you breathe faster and makes your heart work harder. Aerobic activities include walking, running, cycling, dancing, gardening, and swimming.

- **Muscle fitness** (strength) means building stronger muscles and increasing how long you can use them. Weight lifting and push-ups can improve your muscular fitness.
- **Flexibility** is the ability to move your joints and muscles through their full range of motion. Stretching can help you become more flexible.

## How much physical activity do you need for good health?

Experts say your goal should be one, or a combination, of these:

- For at least **150 minutes each week**, do moderate aerobic activity where you feel your heartbeat faster, like brisk walking. Aerobic activity should be spread throughout the week. For example:
  - 3 days a week, 10 minutes at a time.
  - Two or more days a week include muscle strengthening activities.
- Or, at least **75 - 150 minutes a week do more vigorous activities** - breathe faster and have a faster heartbeat than when resting. Spread out the total minutes.
  - Run for 25 minutes 3 times a week.
  - Run for 15 minutes 5 times a week.
  - Two or more days a week include muscle strengthening activities.

Children as young as preschool age need a variety of activity. Children ages 6 to 17 should do 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous aerobic activity every day. Three or more days a week include muscle strengthening activities.

Moderate physical activity is safe for most people. It's important to talk to your doctor before becoming more active, especially if you're sedentary or have health concerns.

### Tips to get started:

- **Make activity part of every day.** Take the stairs and try to park farther from the door of where you're going.
- **Start walking.** Walking is an activity easily accessible to most people. Take a daily walk with family members, friends, coworkers, or pets.
- **Buddy-up.** Find a physical activity partner. This can make exercising more fun.
- **Choose an activity you enjoy,** and stay with it. Vary it with other activities so you don't get bored.

## Energy in = Energy out

How much activity it does it take to burn off your favorite food?

**Energy Balance** is the number of calories you eat compared to the number of calories you burn in one day.

It seems simple. To maintain a healthy weight – *energy out* must equal the *energy in*. However, eating extra calories can add up and may lead to weight gain and un-healthy habits in the long run.

Consuming an **extra 150 calories** a day more than you burn may lead to gaining an **extra 5 pounds over 6 months**. The good news is the reverse is also true. **Cutting only 150 calories a day** from your daily diet lose that same amount - 5 pounds over 6 months. And chances are you won't even notice you missed those calories in your diet.

More IN than OUT over time = weight gain

More OUT than IN over time = weight loss

Try these simple swaps to reduce your calories:

- **Swap out a sugary beverage** like soda pop or coffee for a glass of water or unsweetened tea.
- **Order a small meal** instead of a medium when you go through the drive thru.
- **Switch out your donut** or pastry for a piece of whole wheat toast or yogurt.
- **Trade chips** for fresh fruit or veggies.

Burn an **extra 100 calories\*** throughout your day:



Running (5 mph) = 11 minutes



Walk (3 mph) = 25 minutes



Dancing = 20 minutes



Basketball = 20 minutes



Cleaning house = 35 minutes



Biking (10 mph) = 15 minutes



Mowing the lawn = 15 minutes

\*Average calories burned for a 150-pound man

1. [https://health.gov/paguidelines/second-edition/pdf/Physical\\_Activity\\_Guidelines\\_2nd\\_edition.pdf](https://health.gov/paguidelines/second-edition/pdf/Physical_Activity_Guidelines_2nd_edition.pdf)
2. <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan/healthy-weight-basics/balance.htm>
3. <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/physical-activity-calories-burn>
4. <https://www.acefitness.org/education-and-resources/lifestyle/blog/5460/physical-activity-vs-exercise-what-s-the-difference>

We care about your health and well-being and our staff of registered nurse care managers, mental health professionals, and clinical pharmacists are here to help. If you have questions, please call 855-586-2568, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. MT.