



MHealthy Physical Activity:

AEROBIC ACTION PLAN



Let's get moving, one step at a time. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services suggests doing at least thirty minutes of moderate physical activity on most days of the week. This will help to reduce the risk of developing certain illnesses and diseases. It will also help maintain healthy bones, muscles and joints, and brain health. Step one below, describes physical activity that will promote overall health. To achieve more specific goals you may want to think about doing steps two and three as well, listed below.

STEP ONE: GET STARTED WITH DAILY ACTIVITIES

Think of unique ways to include activity into your day. Here are some ideas to start with:

- Go for a brisk walk
- Use the stairs when you can
- Do your own yard work
- Wash your car
- Park at the far end of the lot
- Dance to songs you like

After you feel you have built stamina by doing daily activities, you may choose to move into an exercise program routine.

Please note, if you are new to structured exercise, or have a health problem, consult with your doctor before starting an exercise program.

STEP TWO: CHOOSING AN AEROBIC ACTIVITY

Aerobic exercise provides cardiovascular conditioning. The term aerobic actually means “with

oxygen,” which means that breathing controls the amount of oxygen that can make it to the muscles to help them burn fuel and move.

Often the daily activities you already do can be lengthened to help you create sustained aerobic activity.

You can also add new activities if interested. Ask yourself these questions in order to explore a new activity.

- Do you like to exercise indoors or outdoors?
- Do you prefer to exercise on your own or in a group setting?
- Is the cost of the activity within your budget?
- Can you do the physical activity at a time that works for you?
- Would I like to work with a personal trainer?
- Do you prefer a variety of choices or a set routine?

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STEP THREE: COMPONENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE AEROBIC PROGRAM

Once you've chosen an aerobic activity, be sure to incorporate the following components of a safe, effective program:

Warm-up (3-5 minutes)

A warm-up prepares your body for exercise. It slowly raises your heart rate and increases blood flow to the working muscles. This improves muscle function and lowers your risk for injury.

How do I warm-up?

Do the activity you have chosen (for example: walking, swimming) at a slower pace for 3-5 minutes.

Aerobic Activity (10-20 minutes to start and slowly increase to 30-60 minutes)

Routine aerobic exercise will help your body use oxygen better. This will give you more energy, and your heart, lungs and muscles will be stronger and healthier.

How often should I perform aerobic activity?

Aim to perform aerobic activity 3-6 days per week.

At what intensity level should I perform my aerobic activity?

Intensity refers to how hard you are working. Pace your effort so that you are exerting yourself in between light activity and somewhat hard activity. You should be able to talk as you exercise. If you can't talk you may be exercising too hard; if you can sing you may need to increase your intensity.

How long should I perform aerobic activity?

Start with 10 continuous minutes of aerobic exercise. Slowly increase to 20-60 minutes per session.

Cool-down (3-5 minutes)

Cooling down allows your heart rate, breathing rate, and blood pressure to return to normal.

How do I cool down?

Slowly reduce the intensity or speed of your activity as you prepare to stop. Work at a slower pace for a period of 3-5 minutes.

Current recommendations suggest for substantial health benefits, adults should do at least 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) to 300 minutes (5 hours) a week of moderate-intensity, or 75 minutes (1 hour and 15 minutes) to 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity, or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic activity. Preferably, aerobic activity should be spread throughout the week, with the individual planning to move most to all days of the week.