



# Fitness

## fact sheet

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ACTION PLAN

**Let's get moving, one step at a time.** The Surgeon General 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 illness and disease. It will also help maintain healthy bones, muscles and joints, and control weight. The following information describes physical activity that will promote overall health.

### STEP ONE: CHOOSING AN AEROBIC ACTIVITY

An Aerobic activity is anything that increases your heart rate, uses large muscle groups, and can be sustained for a long period of time. This includes, but is not limited to, activities such as walking, jogging, cycling or swimming.

### STEP TWO: 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 be going too easy.

**How long should I perform aerobic activity?** Start with 10 minutes of aerobic exercise. Slowly increase to 20-60 minutes per session.

#### MUSCULAR FITNESS

Weight machines, free weights, resistance bands, and stability balls are all types of equipment that provide resistance to help increase strength. Choose equipment that is going to be the most convenient and enjoyable for you.





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## ORDER AND PROGRESSION OF EXERCISES

Work the largest muscle groups first then proceed to the smaller groups (see below). Make sure to include all major muscle groups to avoid strength imbalances.

**Chest:** pecs    **Back:** lats, trapezius    **Legs:** quadriceps, glutes, hamstrings, calves  
**Core:** abdomen, lower back    **Shoulders:** deltoids    **Arms:** triceps, biceps

When you can consistently do 15 repetitions in each set over 3 consecutive workouts, the next time you train increase your weight by the smallest amount available for that exercise.

## GUIDELINES

### Frequency

- 2 or more non-consecutive days is recommended, but one day is acceptable.
- Rest your muscles for 48 hours between workouts. It is normal for your muscles to be slightly sore the day following your workout.

### Intensity

- Perform each exercise with proper form (see "Form" below) until momentary muscle fatigue (the point at which you cannot perform another repetition without losing form) is reached.

### Duration

- Repetitions: To increase muscular strength, perform each exercise so momentary muscle fatigue is reached within 8-15 repetitions for each set.
- Sets: One correctly performed set for each exercise may be enough. Multiple sets may provide better results, depending on your goals.
- Rest interval: If you do multiple sets, a typical rest interval is 30-60 seconds, but it can vary depending on your goals.

### Form

- Proper speed: Lift the weight in two counts and lower the weight in 4 counts (up 1-2, down 1-2-3-4).
- Range of motion: Exercise muscles through their fullest, comfortable range of motion.
- Protecting joints: Do not lock your joints when performing any exercise.
- Proper form: If you must alter your form to complete the repetition, STOP! You have reached momentary muscle fatigue for that set. Do not sacrifice form to perform more repetitions, this is where many injuries occur.
- Breathing: Remember to breathe. DO NOT hold your breath while performing an exercise. Complete at least one breathing cycle (in and out) per repetition. Breathe out on exertion phase, breathe in on relaxation phase.

## FINISH UP WITH SOME STRETCHING (5 MINUTES)

Stretching can reduce the amount of soreness you may experience following your strength training routine by increasing the amount of blood flow to the muscles.

## 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.