

# Get Physical

Physical activity helps control weight, builds lean muscle, reduces fat, promotes strong bone, muscle and joint development, and decreases the risk of obesity.

Physical activity is an essential component of a healthy lifestyle. Combined with healthy eating, it can help prevent a range of chronic diseases—including heart disease, cancer, and stroke, which are the three leading causes of death.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) recommends that adults get at least 2½ hours of moderate to vigorous physical activity each week. You don't have to do it all at once; you can spread it out over easy 30-minute increments, five days a week. Or you can choose from many activities, which you can do in bouts of 10 minutes. The HHS also advises doing muscle-strengthening exercises 2 or more days a week.

## Do What You Love

The best exercise is one that you will actually do. So find a form of physical activity that you enjoy—walking, biking, gardening, skating, as long as it gets you moving—and find time to do it 5 or more days a week.

If it's something you love to do, you'll be much more motivated to do it regularly.

People have different likes and dislikes. This is just as true for physical activity as for anything else. Here are some ideas for getting more physically active:

- Take a dance or aerobic exercise class to get your body moving and your heart pumping
- Start a walking club in your neighborhood
- Take public transportation and walk from the station or the bus stop to your office
  - Remember safety first (if you work in an area that's not pedestrian friendly)

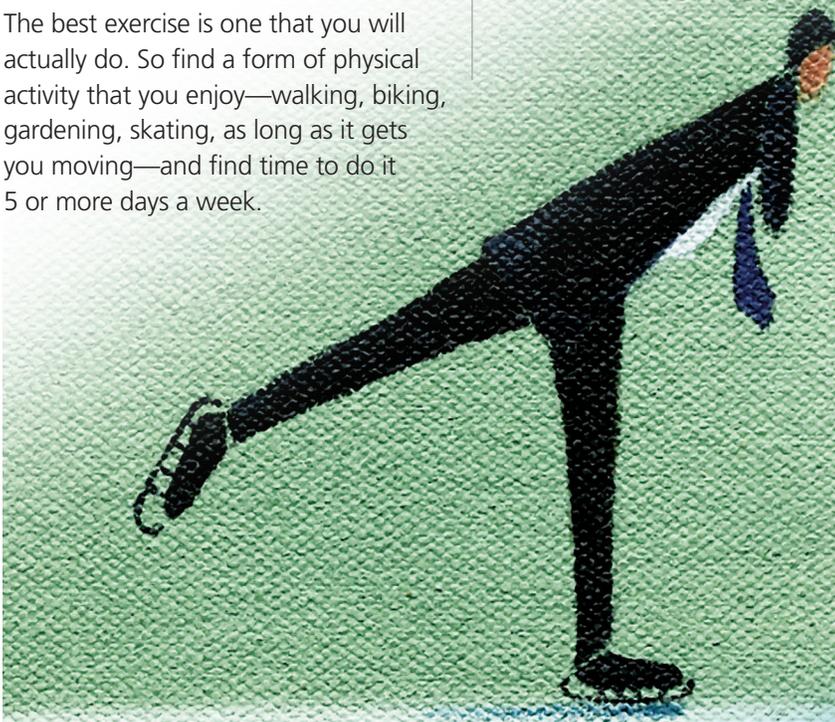
- Take the stairs rather than the elevator
  - Again, safety first (make sure that you are in an environment that is safe and well populated)
  - A good rule of thumb for getting started is to commit yourself to taking the stairs when you have to go up one flight or down two flights.
- Ride your bike or walk to do errands like light grocery shopping, going to the pharmacy, or picking up dry cleaning
- Go for a hike with friends and family
- Join a local intramural team that plays your favorite sport
- Go swimming
- Play with your kids or your grandkids

## Way to Go!

Giving yourself a simple reward when you achieve your short- or long-term goals can be highly motivating. It reinforces the good work that you're doing and can inspire you to do even more.

## Use the Buddy System

Whatever physical activity you choose to engage in can become more enjoyable when a friend or two is doing it alongside you. Having a friend or a group involved helps keep you motivated, and that can give you a boost whenever you're lagging. Knowing that friends are depending on you to meet them for your activity is just the thing to help get you out of the house and keep you going.



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