



Adults Physical Activity Tip Sheet



General Information about physical activity:

Physical activity is movement of the body that uses energy and along with a healthy diet is key to maintaining energy balance, a healthy weight and an overall healthy lifestyle. Adults should do a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity most days of the week to maintain a healthy weight and more often for weight loss.

Benefits of physical activity:

Regular amounts of physical activity are beneficial to one's health and well-being in a variety of ways. These may include:

- Improves self-esteem and reduces feeling of depression and anxiety
- Helps build and maintain strong bones, muscles and joints
- Increases flexibility and posture
- Helps control blood pressure and cholesterol
- Reduces risk of stroke, type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease and colon cancer.

TIP #1: Incorporate Physical Activity into Daily Activities

Adding physical activity to your daily routine at work, home or other places can relieve stress and boost energy. Below are things you can do to be more physically active and won't take much time out of your day.

- Walk, bike, skate or jog to work, school, the store and other destinations.
- Instead of taking the elevator or escalator, walk up the stairs.
- Park your car away from your destination and walk the extra distance.
- Get off the bus a stop or two early and walk the rest of the way.
- Do simple exercises like sit-ups, push-ups or stretching while watching television or at work.
- Play with your children or take the dog for a walk.
- Clean the house, wash the car, or garden.
- Take short 10 minute fitness breaks at work to go on a brisk walk.

TIP #2: Start Out Slow

Even small amounts of physical activity are beneficial to our health. Start with small, attainable steps to increase physical activity and you will be more likely to continue the habits over time.

- Begin by choosing moderate intensity physical activity such as walking, biking, swimming, skating, yoga, or light weight training.
- Gradually build up the time spent doing the activity towards your eventual goal of at least 30 minutes a day, most days of the week.
- Try different types of machines, weights and classes at the gym or at home till you find what you like or a combination that is enjoyable.

TIP #3: Have Fun

Physical Activity does not need to be difficult, boring or overly challenging. Try different types of activities that appeal to you and invite friends and family member to make exercising a social event.

- Try something new like dancing, martial arts, or pilates.
- Take your family hiking on local trails or join the Sierra Club.
- Explore different parks, mountains, and beaches where you can be active.
- Throw a ball or frisbee back and forth for fun.
- Join a neighborhood walking group, local gym or YMCA.

Additional Information: Risks and Injuries

Although there are some risks and injuries that can be involved with physical activity, keeping the following information in mind will help to minimize them.

- Warm up and cool down before and after exercising
- Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water
- Listen to your body and be aware of signs of fatigue or injury
- Consult your physician if you have a history of heart problems, stroke or other serious health conditions.

Source(s):

Physical Activity for Everyone. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/everyone/>

Inside the Pyramid: Physical Activity. United States Department of Agriculture.

http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/physical_activity.html

For additional resources, please dial 2-1-1 or visit the L.A. County Department of Public Health website

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov>.