

Health is a treasure

Exercise Part 3 of 3

by Donald R. Hall, DrPH, CHES

Physical activity and nutrition work together in more ways than weight management.

Increasing the calories you use allows you to eat more, which makes it easier to get the nutrients you need. Physical activity and nutrition work together for bone health, too. Calcium and other nutrients are needed to build and maintain strong bones, but physical activity is needed as well.¹

Consider the following exercise guidelines from the American College of Sports Medicine.²

Keep exercise fun. Don't think of physical activity as work. Think of it as play! Find activities you enjoy. Activity can add adventure and fun to your life.

Be active daily. The new guidelines for Americans state, "Every US adult should accumulate 30 minutes or more of moderate-intensity physical activity on most, preferably all, days of the week."

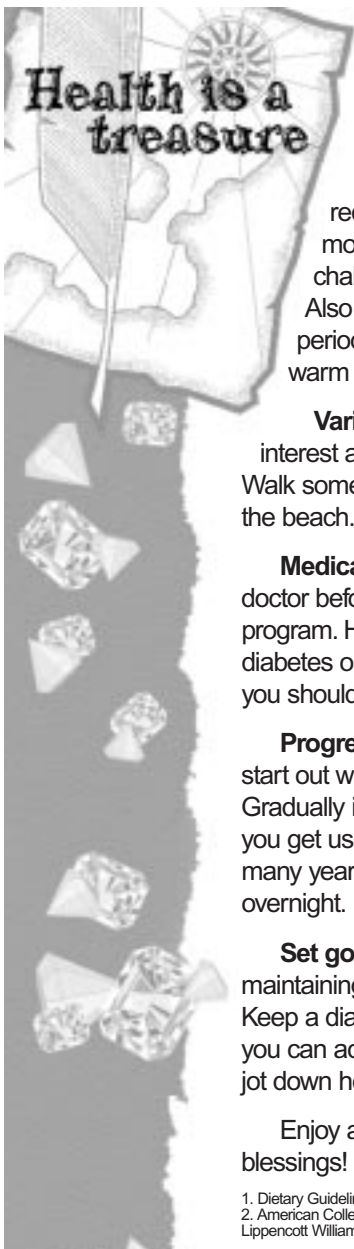
Fitness experts also tell us that you don't have to get all your activity at one time to be beneficial. You can break it up into two 15-minute sessions or even three 10-minute sessions. This makes it much easier to fit exercise into a busy day.



Moderate activities. A recent report from the Nurse's Health Study, including some 72,000 women followed for eight years, showed that those women who walked briskly at least 3 hours each week cut their risk of a heart attack by 35%. Studies with men have shown similar results. Examples of moderate activities include:

- walking briskly (3-4 mph)
- conditioning exercises to music
- biking for pleasure or commuting to work

Of all temporal possessions health is the most precious. Wealth, learning, and honor are dearly purchased at the loss of health. None of these can secure happiness if health is lacking. CDF 20



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- swimming
- mowing lawn (pushing mower)
- playing actively with children
- spading, raking, hoeing in the garden
- golf (walking and pulling clubs)

During the activity you should be active enough to require deep breathing but not be out-of-breath. A light to moderate sweat is also a good sign that you are challenging the body adequately to get a health benefit. Also remember to include a warm-up and a cool down period. Easy walking for a few minutes is a good way to warm up and cool down gradually.

Variety. Incorporate a variety of activities. Variety adds interest and helps prevent overuse of specific muscle groups. Walk some days, ride your bike, swim, exercise to music, hike on the beach.

Medical guidance. Most adults do not need to see their doctor before starting a moderate-intensity physical activity program. However, if you have a chronic disease (such as diabetes or a heart problem) or are a high risk for such problems, you should consult your doctor for guidance.

Progress gradually. If you are not currently an active person, start out with shorter activity times and lower intensity activities. Gradually increase your activity time, frequency, and duration as you get used to the increased activity level. It may have taken you many years to get out of shape. Don't try to get back in shape overnight.

Set goals. People who are successful in starting and maintaining an active lifestyle set goals and log their progress. Keep a diary of your progress. See how many days each week you can achieve your goal of 30+ minutes of physical activity. Also jot down how you feel and other improvements you notice.

Enjoy a good diet and an active lifestyle and reap the blessings!

1. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2000.

2. American College of Sports Medicine, Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription, Sixth Edition, 2000, Lippencott Williams and Wilkens, Philadelphia

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