

# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

## Definition:

Physical activity or exercising is one of the most important steps anyone can take to improve overall health. Studies have shown that regular physical activity at any age reduces the risk for a number of adverse health outcomes (Offices of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, 2015).

Once you have made the decision to become physically active, choose an activity that suits your personality. For example, if you like the company of other people, choose an activity like a dance class or a team sport; if you prefer solitary activity, walking or using equipment in a gym may be better for you. Always check with a physician when you begin a new exercise program, especially if you have not been active for a while (Offices of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, 2015).

After choosing an activity, follow these guidelines to help successfully maintain a physically active lifestyle (Mayo Clinic, 2014):

- ♦ Ask for assistance from someone with an understanding of your selected activity, such as a trainer at your gym or an aerobics instructor, to help you prevent injury and to get the most from your workout.
- ♦ Work toward achieving 30 minutes of physical activity per day, three to five days a week.
- ♦ Set realistic goals for yourself based on your fitness level.
- ♦ Go slow and steady so you don't become injured or disappointed by setbacks.
- ♦ Keep to a regular schedule so you can establish a routine and stick to it. If you

don't stick to your schedule, don't worry. Just pick up where you left off and start again.

- ♦ Remember to always check with your medical provider before starting any new exercise activity.
- ♦ Aim for 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity workouts a week. This will provide the most benefit to your health (Offices of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, 2015). The talk test is an easy way to measure the intensity of the workout. While performing a moderate intensity activity you should be able to talk, but not be able to sing. During a vigorous intensity activity you should only be able to say a few words before pausing for another breath (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015).

## Disclaimer:

*Medline does not practice medicine, and no information presented on this website is medical advice or intended as a substitute for the advice of a physician. All information on this website concerning medical conditions is from publicly available sources.*



## REFERENCES

1. Mayo Clinic Fitness (2014). Exercise: 7 benefits of regular physical activity. Retrieved July 22, 2015, from <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/fitness/in-depth/exercise/art-20048389?pg=1>
2. Offices of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (2015). 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans Summary. Retrieved July 22, 2015, from <http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/guidelines/summary.aspx>
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2015, June 4). Measuring Physical Activity Intensity. Retrieved August 4, 2015, from <http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/measuring/>