



# Healthful Living: Physical Activity



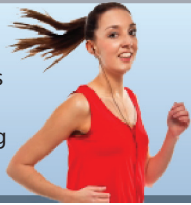
## What You Can Learn From This Handout...

- ▶ The importance of physical activity for overall health
- ▶ The difference between aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities
- ▶ Tips for incorporating physical activity into your routine

### Is all physical activity the same?

You may have heard terms such as “aerobics”, “cardio”, and “muscle strengthening” to describe different types of physical activity. These exercises are all part of a healthy lifestyle and affect your body in different ways. There are two types of physical activity:

**1. Aerobic or “cardio” activities** make you breathe harder, which makes your heart and blood vessels healthier  
Examples: speed walking or jogging



**2. Muscle-strengthening activities** work all major muscle groups  
Examples: push-ups, sit-ups, or lifting weights



### How much exercise should I get in a week?

Ideally, adults should aim to incorporate both aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities into their exercise routine each week. The general rule of thumb is:

This may seem like a lot at first. *But remember:* it’s not necessary to complete all of your exercise at one time. It’s okay to do small amounts throughout the day; just try to do at least 10 minutes of activity at a time.

**1.** 150 minutes (2 hrs 30 mins) of *moderate* aerobic activity  
or  
1 hour and 15 minutes of *vigorous* aerobic activity  
or  
An even mix of *moderate and vigorous* aerobic activity

**2.** 2 or more days of *muscle-strengthening* activities  
Try to exercise all of the major muscle groups:  
legs, hips, back, stomach, chest, shoulders, and arms  
Repeat exercises for each muscle group  
8 to 12 times per set

### What is the difference between moderate and vigorous aerobic activity?

Moderate	Vigorous
You will be doing enough work to raise your heart rate and break a sweat; you will still be able to talk	You will be breathing hard and fast, and your high heart rate will be high; you will not be able to say more than a few words without stopping to take a breath
Some examples: ▶ Walking fast ▶ Water aerobics ▶ Mowing the lawn ▶ Riding a bike on level ground	Some examples: ▶ Running or jogging ▶ Swimming laps ▶ Playing basketball ▶ Riding a bike fast or on hills

**My physical activity plan for the week ahead**

	Aerobic Activities	Muscle-Strengthening Activities
Sunday		
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		

### Tips for incorporating physical activity into your weekly routine

- ▶ Set realistic goals. Do you want to live a healthier lifestyle? Lose weight? Your goals will help you to decide on the types of activities that you will enjoy doing—and keep you motivated.
- ▶ Start slowly: go at your own pace and do what is comfortable for you.
- ▶ Every-day activities count! Pushing a stroller, taking the stairs, cleaning, gardening, washing windows or floors, shoveling snow, raking leaves. The more movement, the better!

**Important!** Before starting any exercise routine, talk with your healthcare provider. He or she can make suggestions for beginning a program that will help you to meet your goals and avoid injury.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION**  
TALK TO YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER  
OR VISIT [WWW.NDEI.ORG](http://WWW.NDEI.ORG)

**REFERENCES** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. How much physical activity do adults need? Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/7ljl5v>  
• U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Be Active Your Way. Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ns4a8k>. All websites accessed March 19, 2013.



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