

Physical Activity: The Simple Facts

Preventive recommendations from Aurora Health Care:

Regular physical activity is recommended for children and adults and can help reduce the risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, obesity, and diabetes—among many other benefits. Talk with your health care provider before starting a new exercise program.

What's in it for me?

You name it. Would you like to:

- feel better, mentally and physically?
- have better control over your weight and cholesterol level?
- have better control over your blood pressure and stress level?
- reduce your risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes?
- increase your heart and lung fitness as well as your muscle tone?

Any of these things can come from regular exercise. If you think that means you have to become a trained athlete, read on...

How hard do I have to work at this?

You don't have to match the athletes on television to be fit. Even a moderate amount of activity can help to improve your health. The key to success is: whatever you do, do it **regularly**.

How do I get started?

If you have not been active, talk with your health care provider about how to begin, especially if you have health problems.

Take it slow and easy. Start with small steps that remind you to just keep moving. Take short walks, use stairs instead of the elevator, work in the garden. Again, whatever you choose to do, make it part of your routine.

Once you are used to a low level of activity, you'll be ready to start some aerobic exercise. For example, you might begin walking, cycling, or swimming. Begin slowly and gradually increase your time and effort.

How long should I work out?

That depends upon your goals. As little as 20 minutes of aerobic exercise three times a week can improve your heart and lung fitness. If weight loss is a goal, you may want to slowly work up to 45–60 minutes four to five times a week.

In general, healthy adults should strive for about 30 minutes of aerobic activity three to five times a week.

A few more tips:

- Choose activities that you **enjoy** doing.
- Try to vary your activities so you don't get bored with the same routine.
- Exercise with a friend or group if that will help you keep at it.
- Set small goals and reward yourself along the way.

Need more information?

Talk with your health care provider if you are starting a new exercise program or if you need more information.

For more information about preventive recommendations from Aurora Health Care, call toll free: 1-877-226-6659.