

# Live Well, Move More

*You can't be healthy without being active. Research shows that no matter what your weight, regular physical activity is one of the greatest predictors of health.*

## Why is physical activity so important?

Regular physical activity can help you feel better and be healthier both now and in the future. In fact, it can do to more improve your health than just about anything else. Why?

- **It protects your health and helps you live longer.** Being inactive is as bad for your health as being overweight, using tobacco, or having high blood pressure or diabetes. Being more active can help prevent or control these problems — and prolong your life. In fact, studies show that **it's better to be active and overweight than inactive and at a normal weight.**
- **It helps you maintain your weight** — or lose weight if you need to. You still need to eat less to lose weight. But the best way to lose weight — and the only way to keep it off — is to add in a lot of physical activity.
- **It makes you feel better.** When exercise is part of your regular day, you have more energy and confidence. You'll also have less anxiety and depression, and you'll be more alert. What's not to love?

## How do I get started?

Start with this idea: **no physical activity is bad, some is good, and more is better.** Wherever you are right now is a great place to start. From there, it can be as easy as 1-2-3.

- 1 Move more.** Set aside some time every day when you can get your heart rate up a little. The goal is to build up to 150 minutes or more a week — or 30 minutes most days of the week. The weekly total is what's important to your health, so fit it in wherever you can. See page 2.
- 2 Sit less.** Along with exercise sessions, it's important to keep moving throughout the day. Sit less. Watch TV less. If you have to sit a lot for your job or school, get up and move around every 20 to 30 minutes. See page 3.
- 3 Do what works for YOU.** Don't be discouraged if you can't meet the recommendations right away. Find activities you like and **build up gradually.** Do what you need to do to **make it fun.** See page 4.



*Physical activity gives you more energy, relieves anxiety and depression, and makes you sharper and more creative. Exercise is vital, but it's also important to move more throughout the day, even if you sit for your job.*

### *It's all about habits*

The key to getting enough activity is to make it a habit. Schedule exercise into your regular routine — just like breakfast or brushing your teeth. And make a habit of fitting in movement wherever you can — taking the stairs, walking instead of riding, and sneaking in a 10-minute walk.

This handout has lots of ideas for new habits. Try a few out. **Mark a  next to the ones you want to try first.** When they become part of your routine, you'll be ready to add in a few more.

# 1. MOVE MORE

## How much physical activity do I need?

*For general health:*

- ❑ **Aim for 150 minutes (2 ½ hours) of activity per week** — or 30 minutes most days of the week. You can break this up into sessions of as little as **10 minutes** at a time, especially if you're just getting started.
- ❑ **Aim for moderate or vigorous intensity.** What does that mean? Here are some examples:



**Light intensity:** Like a casual walk. You're not working hard enough to raise your heart rate much. These activities count toward "moving more throughout the day," but not toward your aerobic activity goal.



**Moderate intensity:** Like a brisk walk. You're working hard enough to raise your heart rate and break a sweat, but can still carry on a conversation.



**Vigorous intensity:** Like jogging or running. You're breathing hard and fast and your heart rates is up. You're probably too winded to carry on a conversation.

*To lose weight or work toward other health goals:*

- ❑ **Aim for 250 to 300 minutes per week** of moderate- to vigorous-intensity activity — or 45 to 60 minutes most days. The people who keep the weight off are the ones who keep up a high dose of exercise lifelong.

## How much activity are you getting now?

*Try it for a week:*

- ☑ Mark a ✓ in one square for each bout of **10 minutes** of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity you get.

### High activity—

If you're trying to lose weight or get other health benefits, you're on the right track!

### Active —

This level of activity provides a **big** boost to your overall health. Keep it up!

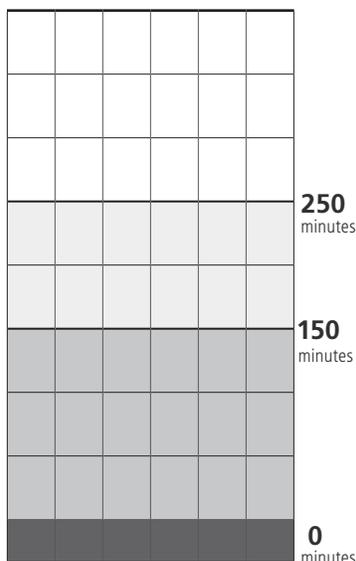


### Low activity —

You've gotten a good start! Now build up by adding in 10 minutes a day.

### No activity —

Time to get moving! Start with a 10-minute walk.



*Your physical activity is as important as your other vital signs, like your heart rate and temperature. Your healthcare provider may ask you about it at regular office visits — and record it in your chart.*

## What type of activity is best?

- ❑ **Focus on aerobic activity first.** Try to get some in most days.



**Aerobic activity** is moderate- or vigorous-intensity activity. It's activity that "revs you up" and gets your heart pumping a little faster and stronger.

Aerobic activity builds your endurance, strengthens your heart, and increases your lung capacity. It releases brain chemicals called endorphins, which boost your mood. And it does all this while burning calories! Examples of aerobic activity include:

- Brisk walking or jogging
- Bicycling
- Swimming or water exercise
- Using a stationary bike, stair climber, or rowing machine
- Vigorous housework, yard work, or gardening

- ❑ **Then add other types of activity for even more benefits.** Add these in a couple of days a week.



**Strength training activities strengthen muscles and bones.** They also boost your metabolism, which means you burn more energy all day long. Strength training is especially important for older people or for people trying to maintain weight loss. Try:

- Weight training machines
- Free weights or resistance bands
- Pushups or squats
- Chores such as heavy gardening



**Balance and flexibility** exercises decrease your risk of injury, and they help you move more easily. Try:

- Stretching
- Dancing
- Yoga
- Martial arts

## How can I get more activity?

- ❑ **Schedule exercise time in your daily routine.**  
Consider the time of day when exercise fits in best. On days when it doesn't fit, add in more activities like walking the stairs at work.
- ❑ **Build up gradually using the FIT factors.** The FIT factors are frequency, intensity, and time. Increase just one of them at a time.
  - 1 **Frequency.** If you can only exercise 10 minutes at a time, try getting in your 10 minutes more often.
  - 2 **Intensity.** If you're doing light-intensity activity now, try building up to moderate intensity.
  - 3 **Time.** If you're walking for 20 minutes, try walking for 30 minutes.
- ❑ **Move more all day long.** You don't have to put your exercise clothes on to keep moving. Find any excuse to stay in motion. See below for ideas.

### *Habits to help you move more*

- ❑ **Take a walk with your family after dinner.**
- ❑ **Walk or bike instead of driving whenever you can.** Walk or bike on short errands. Park farther away. Ride your bike to work once a week.
- ❑ **Take the stairs instead of the elevator.**
- ❑ **Make social occasions more active.** Instead of going to dinner, go dancing, bowling, or hiking.
- ❑ **Make a schedule for your week** that you can repeat most weeks. Here's an example:
  - Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays: go for brisk walk at lunchtime with a co-worker
  - Tuesday and Friday mornings: do a few sit-ups, push-ups, and squats before brushing my teeth
  - Saturday morning: play basketball with my best friend
  - Sunday evening: Go for a brisk walk with the family

## 2. SIT LESS

Getting the recommended amount of physical exercise is important, but so is spending less time sitting. **Too much time sitting can increase your risk of chronic disease, even if you get 150 minutes of exercise a week.** Follow these guidelines:

- **Limit total sitting time,** including time at work or school. A good goal is less than 6 hours per day, but start where you are and work down from there. If you have to sit a lot, try to stand up and move around for a few minutes every 20 or 30 minutes.
- **Limit screen time (TV, video games, Internet),** not including work or school. A good goal is less than 2 hours per day. Watching screens for hours and hours shortens your life.

### How much time do you spend sitting?

Try it for a few days:

- Sitting time — including time at work or school.** Mark a ✓ in one square for each hour sitting.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Day 1												
Day 2												
Day 3												

- Screen time — outside of work or school.** Mark a ✓ in one square for each hour outside of work or school that you spend watching screens.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Day 1						
Day 2						
Day 3						

### *Habits to help you sit less*

- ❑ **Break it up.** Stand and move around for a couple of minutes every 20 or 30 minutes.
- ❑ **Walk and talk.** Stand up or walk whenever you're on the phone. Have some of your meetings while walking, or make it okay to stand up any time during meetings.
- ❑ **Work standing up.** See if you can modify your desk at work to make a standing desk or a treadmill desk.
- ❑ **Turn off the TV.** When you do watch TV, ditch the remote and get up to change the channels. Jog in place during commercials.

### 3. Do what works for YOU

Getting more physical activity into your life — and keeping it up over the long term — takes more than knowing what you're supposed to do. Focus on why it's important to you, and how to make it work for you. Here are some ideas:

**Focus on why it's important to YOU.** How could getting more physical activity make the most difference in **your** life? Write it down:

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#### Choose activities you enjoy and can keep doing for a long time

- ❑ **Make it fun.** Do you prefer competition or contemplation? Bursts of speed or long, steady efforts? Going solo, or being guided through the moves? List several activities that sound fun to you.
- ❑ **Find a buddy.** Having someone to exercise with can help you stay on a regular schedule, and help make it more fun.
- ❑ **Make it family affair.** Don't just be an example. Get your family moving with you.
- ❑ **Think progress, not perfection.** Don't worry about "failing" at physical activity. Changing your lifestyle isn't all-or-nothing. It's about making healthier decisions day by day, and starting again when you get off track.
- ❑ **Get support** from friends and family, and spend less time with people who make it seem harder.

#### Enjoy how it makes you feel

- ❑ **Take note of how you feel when you've been active** — your energy level, your mood, your confidence.
- ❑ **Reward yourself for keeping short-term goals.** Set realistic goals, and then be proud of yourself for keeping them.



*"My brother likes to play basketball with the guys. For me, exercise is my alone time. That's when I do my thinking."*

#### Keep track and be accountable

One of the best ways to stick to a routine is to keep track of what you're doing every day. You'll see pretty quickly how well you're doing — and when you're improving.

- ❑ **Use a pedometer** to keep track of how many steps you take during the day. **Aim for 10,000 steps,**
- ❑ **Use a tracker.** Use a paper tracker, smart phone app, or computer program to record all your physical activity, food, and weight.
- ❑ **Make a goal and a detailed action plan to keep it.** Meeting a challenge is a great motivator. For tools to help you identify and plan for a goal, visit [Intermountainhealthcare.org/wellness](http://Intermountainhealthcare.org/wellness).
- ❑ **Report to someone.** Make sure a few key people know what you're trying to do, and let them know how well you're doing. This could be a member of your family, a friend, or a healthcare provider.



#### Want more help?

If you want more help getting active, it's there for you.

- For help losing weight, ask about *The Weigh to Health*® program.