



Be Physically Active Daily

CHALLENGE
Get 30+ minutes
of physical activity
5 or more days
each week.

Requirements to Complete this WELLNESS CHALLENGE

1. Keep a written record of how many minutes you exercise each day. Record the activity on this month's **Wellness Challenge Calendar**.
2. Read "How fitness improves your health" and "Exercise guidelines" below.
3. You complete the Challenge when you are physically active for 30+ minutes at least 22 days this month!
4. Keep records of your completed Challenge in case your organization requires documentation.

How fitness improves your health

Physical activity protects your heart. According to many studies, about half of all cancers could be prevented by maintaining a healthy weight, being physically active on a daily basis, and eating a healthful diet.

According to studies conducted by the American Cancer Society (ACS) over the past 16 years, more than 20% of all cancer deaths in women and 14% in men are linked directly to being overweight. Another 33% of cancer deaths are linked to poor diet and physical inactivity. That comes to about 90,000 cancer deaths a year caused by being overweight and another 186,000 from poor nutritional choices and lack of physical activity. That's a lot of people dying needlessly.

Regular physical activity is protective to the health in numerous other ways as shown in the list below. To experience these health benefits it is necessary to meet certain criteria. Following the exercise guidelines below can help you design an effective and safe activity program.

Physical activity...

- **Burns excess calories** helping you achieve and maintain a healthy weight
- **Helps lower blood pressure** and improves cholesterol levels (raises HDL cholesterol)
- **Improves insulin sensitivity**, lowering blood glucose levels, and preventing diabetes
- **Improves mood** and self image and combats depression and anxiety
- **Strengthens both muscle and bones**, decreasing risk of injury
- **Reduces risk** for colon and breast cancer
- **Promotes a long, healthy life**

Exercise guidelines

The good news for most people is that physical activity doesn't need to be strenuous to be beneficial. When first getting started, keep your activity moderate. Don't over do! Choose activities you enjoy and that are within your current level of capacity.

The components of a good physical activity program are **duration** (length of continuous activity), **frequency** (how many times a week you do it), and **intensity** (how much effort you put into it). Some activities require minimal effort (strolling through a park, dusting, or golfing using a cart). These are termed light activities. Start with these activities if you're unaccustomed to physical activity.

Once you've achieved a level of endurance, you can increase your endurance by upping the duration, then the frequency, and finally the intensity. Activities requiring moderate intensity of effort are those you can engage in while still carrying on a conversation. Examples of moderate activities are bicycling, rowing, dancing, golfing without a cart, walking briskly on a level surface, mopping, and raking.

After you can easily participate in moderate-intensity activities, you can begin vigorous activities: climbing stairs or hills, swimming laps, digging holes, skiing, jogging, hiking, and playing singles tennis.

Getting started and staying motivated

Maintaining an active lifestyle for a lifetime is the real Challenge. Currently, only about 1 in 4 people are getting adequate physical activity for good health.

Here are some ideas to consider when planning for lifelong fitness.

- **Set weekly goals.** A goal might be 30+ minutes of activity 5+ days each week. Or, it may be walking 2 miles daily, or biking to work. Be specific. Write out your goals and keep a written log of your progress daily (see Calendar following).
- **Exercise with your spouse or a friend.** Adding a social element helps keep your activity fun and improves long-term success.
- **Try a variety of activities.** Walk, bike, swim, hike on the weekends, play tennis, and garden. Have fun!
- **Don't overdo!** If you get too tired or sore muscles from attempting too much too soon, simply ease back a little. Don't go so hard that it isn't fun any more and you give up. Take it easy. Be consistent, and the body will adapt.
- **Think of exercise as "play."** Have fun! Choose pleasant surroundings when possible: exercise in a park, by a river, lake, or other scenic setting.
- **Get comfortable, well fitting shoes** and clothes to exercise in. Join the fitness ranks. Look the part! Keep it fun.
- **Get additional guidance or support.** Join a fitness center, a community aerobics class, the YMCA, or a biking or hiking club.
- **Reward yourself** as you reach your fitness goals. Take a trip. Get new clothes.
- Remember that physical activity is **time well spent.**

The Harvard Alumni study showed that for every hour you exercise you increase your life expectancy by 2 hours!

Aim for 30+

The national fitness guideline by the American College of Sports Medicine and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states: Every adult should accumulate 30 or more minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity on most, preferably all, days of the week.

It's OK to break the exercise into two 15-minute sessions if it fits into your schedule better.

Examples of moderate activities that are all similar in intensity include:

- **Walking** for 35 minutes (covering about 2 miles)
- **Active gardening** for 30 to 45 minutes
- **Bicycling** at 8 to 10 mph for 30 minutes
- **Mowing the lawn** with a push mower or raking leaves for 30 to 40 minutes
- **Active dancing** for 30 to 40 minutes
- **Water aerobics** for 30 to 40 minutes
- **Swimming laps** at a moderate pace for 25 to 30 minutes
- **Golfing** for 45 to 60 minutes
- **Playing volleyball** for 45 to 60 minutes
- Doing **conditioning exercises** for 30 to 45 minutes

Safety

Most people don't need to see their doctor before starting a moderate-intensity activity program. However, if you have a health problem such as obesity, diabetes, or a heart problem, get your doctor's guidance before beginning a fitness program. A moderate-intensity activity should feel "fairly easy to somewhat hard" and make you breathe deeply but not be out of breath. Working up a good sweat is also an indication of cardiovascular benefit. Start within your current fitness level and gradually progress to meet your goal.

Progression

If you are already fit and enjoy more vigorous activity, that's great! Running, skiing, tennis, and other active sports add challenge and enjoyment. If you are over 40, however, and not used to vigorous activity, get your doctor's guidance before significantly increasing your level of physical activity.

Aerobic activities should also be supplemented with strength-developing exercises at least twice per week to improve muscle/bone health. If you want further benefit from exercise, gradually work up to 45 to 60 minutes per day. This is especially helpful for those needing help in losing or maintaining their weight.



Sources:

1. *Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription, American College of Sports Medicine. 2000.*
2. *Physical activity promotion, Journal of the American Medical Association. June 11, 2003.*
3. *Excess Weight Linked to 90,000 US Cancer Deaths Annually. American Cancer Society. March 23, 2003.*
4. *Endurance Exercises, National Institute on Aging. Available at: www.weboflife.ksc.nasa.gov/exerciseandaging/chapter4_endurance.html*



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Instructions

1. Post this record sheet where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.).
2. Record the number of minutes you exercise each day. Put an "X" in the box on those days you met your Wellness Challenge. Use this calendar to also record weight and any other items you may want to track.
3. At the end of the month, total the number of days you exercised at least 30 minutes. You must meet this goal at least 22 days out of the month to complete the Challenge. Then keep up this healthy practice for a lifetime of best health!
4. Enter your completion of this Wellness Challenge on the Health Activity Tracker report for the month. Keep this record for evidence of completion.

MONTH: _____							WC = Wellness Challenge	ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary	
WC <input type="checkbox"/>	WC <input type="checkbox"/>	WC <input type="checkbox"/>	WC <input type="checkbox"/>	WC <input type="checkbox"/>	WC <input type="checkbox"/>	WC <input type="checkbox"/>		
ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____		
WC <input type="checkbox"/>	WC <input type="checkbox"/>	WC <input type="checkbox"/>	WC <input type="checkbox"/>	WC <input type="checkbox"/>	WC <input type="checkbox"/>	WC <input type="checkbox"/>		
ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____		
WC <input type="checkbox"/>	WC <input type="checkbox"/>	WC <input type="checkbox"/>	WC <input type="checkbox"/>	WC <input type="checkbox"/>	WC <input type="checkbox"/>	WC <input type="checkbox"/>		
ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____		
WC <input type="checkbox"/>	WC <input type="checkbox"/>	WC <input type="checkbox"/>	WC <input type="checkbox"/>	WC <input type="checkbox"/>	WC <input type="checkbox"/>	WC <input type="checkbox"/>		
ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____		
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ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____		
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ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____		

_____ Number of days this month I got 30+ minutes of physical activity such as brisk walking

Other wellness projects completed this month:

Signature _____ Date _____

