

2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines

Appendix 1. *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*

In addition to consuming a healthy eating pattern, regular physical activity is one of the most important things Americans can do to improve their health. The *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*,^[1] released by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, provides a comprehensive set of recommendations for Americans on the amounts and types of physical activity needed each day. Adults need at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity and should perform muscle-strengthening exercises on 2 or more days each week. Youth ages 6 to 17 years need at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day, including aerobic, muscle-strengthening, and bone-strengthening activities (see [Table A1-1](#) for additional details). Just as individuals can achieve a healthy eating pattern in a variety of ways that meet their personal and cultural preferences, they can engage in regular physical activity in a variety of ways throughout the day and by choosing activities they enjoy. [Table A1-2](#) provides a list of Federal resources, including handouts, online assessments, trackers, and interactive websites. These can be used to help motivate consumer audiences to make healthy physical activity choices.

Table A1-1.

Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans Recommendations

Age

6 to 17 years

Recommendations

Children and adolescents should do 60 minutes (1 hour) or more of physical activity daily.

- Aerobic: Most of the 60 or more minutes a day should be either moderate^a- or vigorous-intensity^b aerobic physical activity, and should include vigorous-intensity physical activity at least 3 days a week.
 - Muscle-strengthening:^c As part of their 60 or more minutes of daily physical activity, children and adolescents should include muscle-strengthening physical activity on at least 3 days of the week.
 - Bone-strengthening:^d As part of their 60 or more minutes of daily physical activity, children and adolescents should include bone-strengthening physical activity on at least 3 days of the week.
 - It is important to encourage young people to participate in physical activities that are appropriate for their age, that are enjoyable, and that offer variety.
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Age**18 to 64 years****Recommendations**

- All adults should avoid inactivity. Some physical activity is better than none, and adults who participate in any amount of physical activity gain some health benefits.
- For substantial health benefits, adults should do at least 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) a week of moderate-intensity, or 75 minutes (1 hour and 15 minutes) a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity, or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic activity. Aerobic activity should be performed in episodes of at least 10 minutes, and preferably, it should be spread throughout the week.
- For additional and more extensive health benefits, adults should increase their aerobic physical activity to 300 minutes (5 hours) a week of moderate-intensity, or 150 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity, or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity activity. Additional health benefits are gained by engaging in physical activity beyond this amount.
- Adults should also include muscle-strengthening activities that involve all major muscle groups on 2 or more days a week.

Age**65 years and older****Recommendations**

- Older adults should follow the adult guidelines. When older adults cannot meet the adult guidelines, they should be as physically active as their abilities and conditions will allow.
 - Older adults should do exercises that maintain or improve balance if they are at risk of falling.
 - Older adults should determine their level of effort for physical activity relative to their level of fitness.
 - Older adults with chronic conditions should understand whether and how their conditions affect their ability to do regular physical activity safely.
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^a Moderate-intensity physical activity: Aerobic activity that increases a person's heart rate and breathing to some extent. On a scale relative to a person's capacity, moderate-intensity activity is usually a 5 or 6 on a 0 to 10 scale. Brisk walking, dancing, swimming, or bicycling on a level terrain are examples.

^b Vigorous-intensity physical activity: Aerobic activity that greatly increases a person's heart rate and breathing. On a scale relative to a person's capacity, vigorous-intensity activity is usually a 7 or 8 on a 0 to 10 scale. Jogging, singles tennis, swimming continuous laps, or bicycling uphill are examples.

^c Muscle-strengthening activity: Physical activity, including exercise that increases skeletal muscle strength, power, endurance, and mass. It includes strength training, resistance training, and muscular strength and endurance exercises.

^d Bone-strengthening activity: Physical activity that produces an impact or tension force on bones, which promotes bone growth and strength. Running, jumping rope, and lifting weights are examples.

Source: Adapted from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*. Washington (DC): U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2008. Available at: <http://www.health.gov/paguidelines> (<http://www.health.gov/paguidelines>). Accessed August 6, 2015.

Table A1-2.

Federal Physical Activity Resources

Program/Initiative

Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans

Lead Office

Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (ODPHP)

Website

www.health.gov/paguidelines (<http://www.health.gov/paguidelines>)

Program/Initiative

Healthfinder.gov (consumer resources)

Lead Office

ODPHP

Website

www.healthfinder.gov (<http://www.healthfinder.gov>)

Program/Initiative

Healthy People 2020 (Physical Activity national objectives)

Lead Office

ODPHP

Website

www.healthypeople.gov (<http://www.healthypeople.gov>)

Program/Initiative

Let's Move!

Lead Office

Office of the First Lady

Website

www.letsmove.gov (<http://www.letsmove.gov>)

Program/Initiative

Step it Up! The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Walking and Walkable Communities

Lead Office

Office of the Surgeon General

Website

www.surgeongeneral.gov (<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov>)
