

Exercise to Stay Healthy: Brief Version

How does exercise help me stay healthy?

Exercise helps both your body and your mind. It helps lower your risk of disease. It helps you feel better.

When you exercise every day, you can lower your chances of having:

- a stroke
- heart disease
- diabetes.

Exercise can lower your:

- blood pressure
- blood cholesterol
- blood sugar.

Exercise helps your mood. It changes how you feel. Exercise helps you:

- Have more energy.
- Sleep well.

How do I start to exercise?

Always check with your health care provider before you start an exercise program. If you have any health problems, talk to your provider about what exercises would be right for you.

Choose exercises that:

- You enjoy.
- Fit into your schedule.
- Allow for any health problems.

Do warm-up exercises every time you exercise.

- Gently stretch your muscles for 5 to 10 minutes.
- When you stretch, you make your muscles less tight. You are less likely to hurt yourself.

You can walk to warm up. It gets your blood flowing.

What types of exercises should I do?

You do not need to exercise really hard to be healthy. You can do exercises at a low or medium level and stay fit. It depends on your health needs. Ask your health care provider what is right for you.

You could:

- Stretch. It helps the muscles be less tight.

- Lift weights. It helps you make your muscles stronger.
- Do aerobics. It gives your lungs and heart a good workout. It sends blood to your muscles. It makes your heart, lungs, and muscles stronger.

There are many kinds of aerobic exercises. You can:

- Walk.
- Swim.
- Run.
- Bicycle.
- Dance.

You might like to:

- Ice skate or roller skate.
- Take aerobics classes.
- Go cross-country skiing.
- Row a boat.

What else do I need to know?

You may want to count the calories you burn when you exercise. You can burn 300 calories or more in an hour when you walk, garden, dance, swim, or bicycle.

Right after you exercise, do cool-down exercises for 5 to 10 minutes. When you do cool-down exercises, you help:

- Your heart rate and breathing go back to normal.
- Keep your muscles from getting stiff.

You can walk to help you cool down. It is also good to stretch after you exercise. This keeps your muscles from getting tight.

Talk to your health care provider about what kind of exercise is best for you. Also ask how much you should exercise.

- If you want to keep weighing the same, you probably need to exercise 30 to 60 minutes at a time, 4 to 5 days each week.
- If you need to lose weight, you may need to exercise more. You may need 90 minutes of exercise on exercise days. But you can break it up. You could exercise for 30 minutes, 3 times a day.

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