

UN–L for Families  
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### Remain Physically Active for Healthier Body

When trying to lose weight and maintain a healthy lifestyle, it's important to not only focus on dieting and eating healthier, but also exercising and staying physically active, reports Wanda Koszewski, extension nutrition specialist.

When trying to lose weight and maintain a healthy lifestyle, it's important to not only focus on dieting and eating healthier, but also exercising and staying physically active.

There is evidence that exercising regularly prevents excess weight gain and helps people maintain a healthy weight. Exercise doesn't have to be going to a gym. It can be as simple as taking a long, brisk walk outside. There are different suggestions and recommendations on the amount or physical activity different ages of people should do during a week.

The recommendation for ages 6 and up is at least 60 minutes of moderate-intensity or vigorous-intensity physical activity each day. Moderate-intensity activity is described as aerobic activity that increases a person's heart rate and breathing to a five or six on a scale of zero to 10. This includes brisk walking, dancing, swimming or bicycling on level terrain. Vigorous-intensity activity is described as aerobic activity that greatly increases the heart rate and breathing. On a scale of zero to 10, this would rate at a seven or eight and includes jogging, tennis, swimming laps continuously and bicycling uphill.

Vigorous-intensity activity should occur at least three days a week. Muscle-strengthening activity, activity that increases skeletal muscle strength, power, endurance and mass, should be included at least three days of the week. This includes various strength and resistance training and endurance exercises. Another type of activity that should be included at least three days of the week is bone-strengthening, which produces an impact on bones and promotes bone growth and strength. This includes running, jumping rope and lifting weights. Adults should encourage children and adolescents to participate in activities they enjoy, that are appropriate for their age and that offer variety.

All adults should avoid inactivity. It's recommended that adults age 18 to 64 exercise for 150 minutes each week at a moderate-intensity or 75 minutes a week at a vigorous-intensity. Aerobic activity is activity done in episodes of at least 10 minutes. Adults can increase their amount of activity to 300 minutes of moderate activity and 150 minutes of vigorous activity for more extensive benefits. For two or more days during the week, part of an adult's exercise should include muscle-strengthening activities using all major muscle groups.

Older adults, age 65 and up, should follow the adult guidelines, but if they are unable to meet those guidelines, they should remain as physically active as possible. People above age 65 should determine their physical activity effort level relative to their fitness level. They should include exercises that will help maintain or improve their balance to reduce the risk of falling. Also, if older adults have chronic conditions, they should understand whether those conditions affect their ability to exercise safely and how those conditions affect that activity.

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