

# Get Moving, America!

## *New Guides Call for Aerobic Fitness, Muscle Strengthening*

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**O**n Oct. 7, the US Department of Health and Human Services released new federal government recommendations for physical activity.

The *2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans* are based on the most up-to-date scientific evidence for the health benefits of a physically active lifestyle.

The guidelines, which can be viewed in full at [www.health.gov/paguidelines](http://www.health.gov/paguidelines), promote safer activity for persons of all ages and call for Americans to engage in both aerobic and muscle strengthening activities each week.

### *2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*

For general health benefits:

**Children and Youth:** Should do 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous intensity aerobic activity daily and muscle strengthening activities at least 3 days per week. As part of their 60 minutes, vigorous intensity activity and bone strengthening activities should be included at least 3 days per week.

**Adults:** Should do 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic activity OR 75 minutes of vigorous activity OR an equivalent combination of moderate and vigorous aerobic activity each week. Adults should do muscle strengthening activities at least 2 days per week.

**Older Adults:** Should do 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic activity OR 75 minutes of vigorous activity OR an equivalent combination of moderate and vigorous aerobic activity each week. Older adults should do muscle strengthening activities at least 2 days per week and include exercises that promote balance.

**Adults and Older Adults:** For additional health benefits they should work up to 300 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic activity OR 150 minutes of vigorous intensity aerobic activity OR an equivalent combination of moderate and vigorous intensity activity.

**Pregnant Women:** Should get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity a week during pregnancy and the time after delivery, preferably spread through the week. Pregnant women who habitually engage in vigorous aerobic activity or who are highly active can continue during pregnancy and the time after delivery, provided they remain healthy and discuss with their health care provider how and when activity should be adjusted over time.

**Adults with Disabilities:** Should (if able) get at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity a week, or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity a week. They should incorporate muscle-strengthening activities involving all major muscle groups two or more days a week. When they are not able to meet the guidelines, they should engage in regular physical activity according to their abilities and should avoid inactivity.

**People with Chronic Medical Conditions:** Adults with chronic conditions get important health benefits from regular physical activity. They should do so with the guidance of a health care provider.

### **Not Your Normal Rx**

These recommendations are unique in several ways.

The new *Guidelines* are much more flexible, allowing for persons of all ages and abilities to achieve their physical activity in a variety of ways. The *Guidelines* also promote the con-

cept that any activity is better than none, and you can get more health benefits with the more you do.

Finally, these are the first physical activity recommendations that addressed safety as a major theme.

"These guidelines have an important, positive message that there are many safe ways people can be active and avoid injury," said Dr. Julie Gilchrist of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control.

The *Guidelines* include the following tips on how to be safe and active:

- Choose appropriate activities.
- Gradually increase activity levels over time.
- Protect yourself, including:
  - Use the appropriate equipment/gear.
  - Look for safer environments.
  - Follow the rules and policies of the sport/activity.
  - Make sensible choices about when and how to be active.

### **Full Recommendations**

Details of the *Guidelines* are available at [www.health.gov/paguidelines](http://www.health.gov/paguidelines).