

American Cancer Society

Physical Activity and Cancer



American Cancer Society Viewpoint on Physical Activity

- Obesity and inactivity can kill.
- The American Cancer Society has long recognized the benefits of moderate physical activity and suggests several things you can do to make a big difference in your life.



Benefits of Physical Activity

- Scientific evidence indicates that physical activity may reduce the risk of several types of cancer, including cancers of the breast and colon, and can provide other important health benefits.



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Recommendations on Physical Activity

- Adults should receive 30 minutes or more of moderate activity at least five or more days a week.
- Children and adolescents should receive 60 minutes or more of moderate to vigorous activity at least five days a week.



Impact of Physical Activity

- Regular physical activity helps maintain a healthful weight.
- Accelerates movement of food through the intestine, reducing the length of time that the bowel lining is exposed to mutagens.
- May decrease the exposure of breast tissue to circulating estrogen.
- Reduces the risk of heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, and hypertension.

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Impact of Physical Activity (Cont'd)

- May affect colon, breast, and other cancers by improving energy metabolism and reducing concentrations of insulin and related growth factors.
- Helps prevent adult onset diabetes, which has been associated with increased risk of cancers of the colon, pancreas, and possibly other sites.



Get Active

- Just beginning: Start with a gradual increase to 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity on at least five days per week.
- Those already active: Strive toward accumulating 45 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity on most days of the week.



Moderate Intensity Activities

- Exercise and Leisure: Walking, dancing, leisurely bicycling, skating, yoga, and horseback riding.
- Sports: Volleyball, golfing, softball, baseball, badminton, and doubles tennis.
- Home Activities: Mowing the lawn, as well as general lawn and garden maintenance.
- Occupational Activities: Walking and lifting as part of the job (custodial work, farming, auto or machine repair, etc.).



Vigorous Intensity Activities

- Exercise and Leisure: Jogging or running, fast bicycling, circuit weight training, aerobic dance, and jumping rope.
- Sports: Soccer, field or ice hockey, singles tennis, racquetball, baseball, and cross-country skiing.
- Home Activities: Digging, carrying, hauling, masonry, and carpentry.
- Occupational Activities: Heavy manual labor (forestry, construction work, fire fighting, etc.).



Ways to Reduce Sedentary Behavior

- Use stairs rather than an elevator.
- Walk or bike to your destination.
- Exercise at lunch with co-workers, family, or friends.
- Take a 10-minute exercise break at work to stretch or take a quick walk.
- Go dancing.
- Join a sports team.



Increasing Physical Activity Safely

- Men over 40, women over 50, and people with chronic illnesses and/or established cardiovascular risk factors should consult their physicians before beginning a vigorous physical activity program.

Children and Physical Activity

- Children and adolescents who are physically active grow up to be physically active adults.
- Sports and fitness activities should be incorporated into school and home.
 - ✓ Daily physical education programs and activity breaks at school.
 - ✓ Minimize television and computer game time at home.



Get Started Now!

- The benefits of physical activity accumulate over the course of a lifetime.
- Increasing the level of physical activity at any age can provide health benefits.



For More Information

For more information on cancer or cancer resources, call the American Cancer Society 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at 1-800-ACS-2345, or visit their Web site at www.cancer.org.

