



# STEPS TO A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

Being physically active and following a healthy diet are some of the best ways to keep your heart healthy. The more active you are, the more you will benefit.

## Types of physical activity



**Aerobic:** This activity moves your large muscles, such as those in your arms and legs. Running, swimming, walking, bicycling, dancing, and doing jumping jacks are examples of aerobic activity. Aerobic activity also is called endurance activity.

Aerobic activity makes your heart beat faster than usual. You also breathe harder during this type of activity. Over time, regular aerobic activity makes your heart and lungs stronger and able to work better.



**Muscle-strengthening:** Activities that improve the strength, power, and endurance of your muscles. Doing pushups and sit-ups, lifting weights, climbing stairs, and digging in the garden are examples of muscle-strengthening activities.



**Bone-strengthening:** With these activities, your feet, legs, or arms support your body's weight, and your muscles push against your bones. This helps make your bones strong. Running, walking, jumping rope, and lifting weights are examples of bone-strengthening activities.



**Stretching:** Stretching helps improve your flexibility and your ability to fully move your joints. Touching your toes, doing side stretches, and doing yoga exercises are examples of stretching.



**Light- and moderate-intensity activities:** Light-intensity activities are common daily activities that don't require much effort. Moderate-intensity activities make your heart, lungs, and muscles work harder than light-intensity activities do.

On a scale of 0 to 10, moderate-intensity activity is a 5 or 6 and produces noticeable increases in breathing and heart rate. A person doing moderate-intensity activity can talk but not sing.



**Vigorous-intensity activities:** Vigorous-intensity activities make your heart, lungs, and muscles work hard. On a scale of 0 to 10, vigorous-intensity activity is a 7 or 8.

A person doing vigorous-intensity activity can't say more than a few words without stopping for a breath.

## Examples of aerobic activities

- Pushing a grocery cart around a store
- Gardening, such as digging or hoeing, that causes your heart rate to go up
- Walking, hiking, jogging, running
- Water aerobics or swimming laps
- Bicycling, skateboarding, rollerblading, and jumping rope
- Ballroom dancing and aerobic dancing
- Tennis, soccer, hockey, and basketball

## Physical activity benefits your health

Physically active adults are at lower risk of depression and declines in cognitive function as they get older. Cognitive function includes thinking, learning, and judgment skills.

Physical activity also lowers your risk of many diseases, such as coronary heart disease, diabetes, and cancer.

## Healthy eating is another way to improve your lifestyle



### Your doctor may recommend a diet that includes the following:

- Fat-free or low-fat dairy products, such as skim milk
- Fish high in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon, tuna, and trout, about twice a week
- Fruits, such as apples, bananas, oranges, pears, and prunes
- Legumes, such as kidney beans, lentils, chickpeas, black-eyed peas, and lima beans
- Vegetables, such as broccoli, cabbage, and carrots
- Whole grains, such as oatmeal, brown rice, and corn tortillas



### You should limit:

- A lot of red meat
- Palm and coconut oils
- Sugary foods and beverages
- A lot of sodium
- Alcohol



### Two nutrients in your diet make blood cholesterol levels rise:

- Saturated fat—found mostly in foods that come from animals
- Trans fat (trans fatty acids)—found in foods made with hydrogenated oils and fats, such as stick margarine; baked goods, such as cookies, cakes, and pies; crackers; frostings; and coffee creamers. Some trans fats also occur naturally in animal fats and meats

Saturated fat raises your blood cholesterol more than anything else in your diet. Only 5%-6% of your daily calories should come from saturated fat. Food labels list the amounts of saturated fat, so it's important to keep track.

## Follow the examples below to keep track of your fat intake

If you eat	Try to eat no more than
1200 calories a day	8 grams of saturated fat a day
1500 calories a day	10 grams of saturated fat a day
1800 calories a day	12 grams of saturated fat a day
2000 calories a day	13 grams of saturated fat a day
2500 calories a day	17 grams of saturated fat a day

Not all fats are bad. Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats actually help lower blood cholesterol levels. Some sources of monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats are:

- Avocados
- Corn, sunflower, and soybean oils
- Nuts and seeds, such as walnuts
- Olive, canola, peanut, safflower, and sesame oils
- Peanut butter
- Salmon and trout
- Tofu

## Quitting smoking

A major change you can make toward a healthier lifestyle is quitting smoking. People who smoke are more likely to have a heart attack than people who don't smoke. The risk of having a heart attack increases with the number of cigarettes smoked each day. Smoking also raises your risk of stroke and lung diseases, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and lung cancer.

Quitting smoking can greatly reduce your risk of heart and lung diseases. Ask your doctor about programs and products that can help you quit. Also, try to avoid secondhand smoke.

**Always talk to your doctor about what is best for you. Ask your doctor before starting any treatments or making changes in your routine or medicine.**

**Source:** National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; National Institutes of Health; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.



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