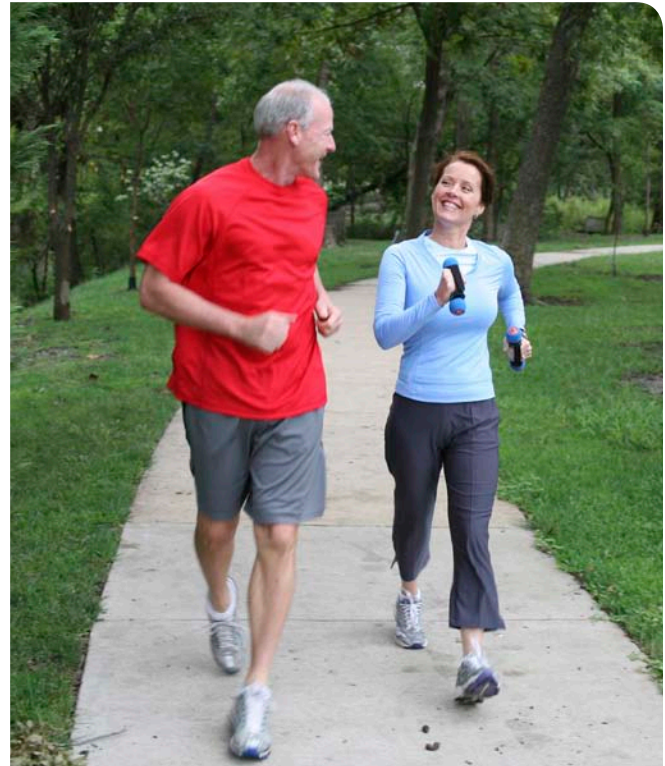




# Why Should I Be Physically Active?

If your doctor has suggested that you begin a physical activity program, follow that advice. People who don't get enough physical activity are much more likely to develop health problems.

- Regular, moderate-intensity physical activity can lower your risk of
- Heart disease and heart attack
- High blood pressure
- High total cholesterol, high LDL (bad) cholesterol and low HDL (good) cholesterol
- Overweight or obesity
- Diabetes
- Stroke



If you have a chronic condition and haven't been active, check with your doctor for an exercise program that's right for you. Once you start, you'll find that exercise isn't just good for your health — it's also fun.

## What else can physical activity do for me?

Physical activity is associated with these benefits:

- Strengthens your heart, lungs, bones and muscles.
- Gives you more energy and strength.
- Helps control your weight and blood pressure.
- Helps you handle stress.
- Helps your quality of sleep.
- Helps you feel better about how you look.

## What kind of activities should I do?

You don't have to be an athlete to lower your risk of heart disease and stroke! If done on most or all days, you can benefit from moderate activities like these:

- Brisk walking
- Gardening and yard work
- Moderate to heavy housework
- Pleasure dancing and home exercise

More vigorous physical activity can further improve the fitness of your heart and lungs. Start slowly, and build up as your heart gets stronger. Start with light or moderate intensity activity, for short periods of time. Spread your sessions throughout the week.

Most healthy adults do not need to consult a doctor or healthcare provider before becoming more physically active. But healthcare providers can provide advice on the types of activities best for you and ways to progress at a safe and steady pace. Then try one or more of these:

- Hiking or jogging
- Stair climbing
- Bicycling, swimming or rowing
- Aerobic dancing or cross-country skiing

*(continued)*



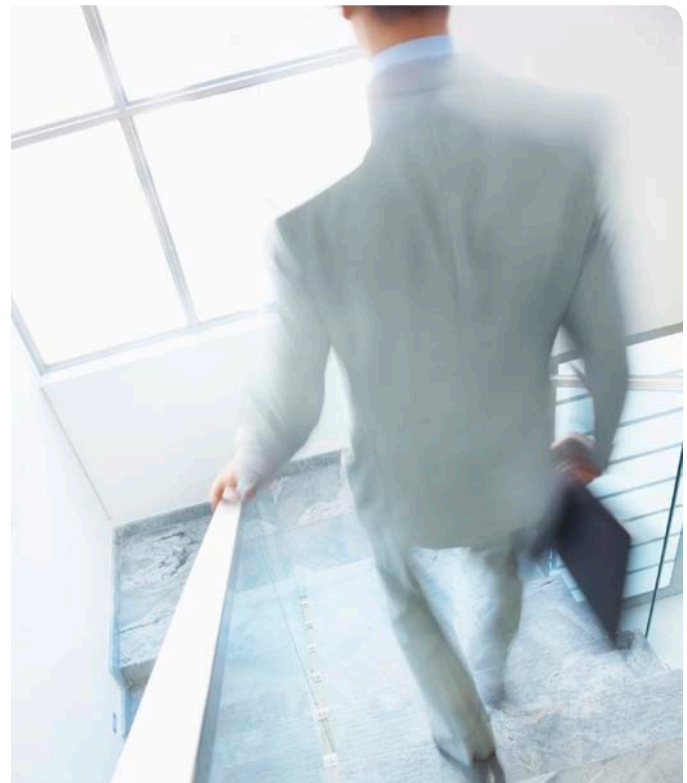
### How often should I exercise?

- Work up to 30 to 60 minutes of daily activity for a total of at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity per week.
- Make sure it's regular — most or all days of the week.

### What else can I do?

Look for ways to add more physical activity to your daily routine. Making small changes in your lifestyle can make a big difference in your overall health. Here are some examples:

- Take a walk for 10 or 15 minutes during your lunch break.
- Take stairs instead of escalators and elevators.
- Park farther from the store and walk through the parking lot.



Taking the stairs instead of escalators or elevators is an easy way to add physical activity to your daily routine.

### HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

- 1** Talk to your doctor, nurse or other healthcare professionals. If you have heart disease or have had a stroke, members of your family also may be at higher risk. It's very important for them to make changes now to lower their risk.
- 2** Call **1-800-AHA-USA1** (1-800-242-8721), or visit [heart.org](http://heart.org) to learn more about heart disease.
- 3** For information on stroke, call **1-888-4-STROKE** (1-888-478-7653) or visit us at [StrokeAssociation.org](http://StrokeAssociation.org).

### Do you have questions for the doctor or nurse?

Take a few minutes to write your questions for the next time you see your healthcare provider.

For example:

**What's the best type of physical activity for me?**

**How much should I exercise?**

### My Questions:

We have many other fact sheets to help you make healthier choices to reduce your risk, manage disease or care for a loved one. Visit [heart.org/answersbyheart](http://heart.org/answersbyheart) to learn more.

**Knowledge is power, so Learn and Live!**