

# Tips to Become More Active

Being physically active is important for your health! Yet with a busy schedule or not much experience, you may find yourself putting it off. Consider this: physical activity can be as powerful as medication for helping many health conditions.

## How Much Physical Activity Do I Need?

Research tells us that adults need both aerobic activity and strength training. Together, these exercises promote long-term health benefits. See recommendations below.

### Aerobic Activity

Aerobic activity means getting your body moving. At a moderate level, your heart rate and breathing are up, but you can still have a conversation. To reach 150 minutes a week, try to add some more activity every day—even small amounts at a time. You'll be surprised by how quickly you make your goal!

### Strength Training

Strength activities make the muscles do more work than they are used to. When you do strength training, include all your muscle groups—arms, shoulders, legs, back, chest and stomach. Start slowly—begin with a few exercises that are not too hard. If you're unsure how to begin, talk to an exercise professional at a gym or in a class.



Sutter  
Resources

Before starting a new physical activity plan, check with your healthcare team.

To learn more about fitness, go to [sutterhealth.org/health/fitness](https://sutterhealth.org/health/fitness). You may find local resources by going to [sutterhealth.org/classes-events](https://sutterhealth.org/classes-events) and selecting topics such as: Fitness, Heart Health, Nutrition, or Weight Loss.

### At a Glance: How Much Physical Activity Do I Need?

#### Moderate Aerobic 150 minutes a week

- Active yoga
- Bicycling
- Dancing
- Exercise class
- Swimming
- Tennis
- Walking briskly
- Yard or home repair work

AND

#### Strength Training 2 days a week

- Exercises using your body weight for resistance (planks, sit-ups, push-ups, lunges)
- Lifting weights
- Working with resistance bands



*Reward yourself when you meet your activity goals.  
Do something special to celebrate!*

### Did You Know?

Regular physical activity can:

- Improve your sleep
- Reduce stress and anxiety
- Ward off depression
- Help you lose weight and keep it off
- Improve your memory

## Ways to Increase Your Activity

When getting started, keep in mind **any** increase in activity is good for your health. You might not reach your goals right away but you are still making progress.

### Add More Movement in Your Day

- When sitting, try to take regular activity breaks to walk or stretch about every 30 minutes. Get up and move when watching TV, working on your computer or reading. Many fitness watches have settings to remind you to take breaks.
- Add more walking. For instance, walk while talking on the phone or waiting for your kids. Walk your dog more. Take the stairs, add more trips back and forth, walk your grocery cart back to the store, or park farther away from your destination. Take a short walk after meals.
- Add more movement around the house. Do chores like vacuuming or dusting. Go outside to garden, sweep, or play with the kids.

#### Did You Know?

Research shows that sitting for one to two hours at a time without moving is not healthy. Make sure to walk or stretch every 30 minutes.

### Try Tracking Your Daily Steps

- Use a fitness tracker, pedometer or smart phone to count your daily steps and monitor your progress.
- Track your steps for a week. Then gradually add more steps each week. Try to work up to a goal of 7,000 to 10,000 steps per day.

### Find Something You Enjoy—Make It Fun

- Make a list of physical activities you enjoy and find times to fit them in your week.
- Find an activity buddy and make regular plans with them.
- Try new things. Ask friends what activities they enjoy. Or try a new activity on your own.
- Be active while listening to music, audio books or podcasts. Or use an exercise machine located where you can watch TV or movies.



### Track Goals and Prepare for Challenges

- Set small, reasonable goals. Nobody expects you to climb a mountain tomorrow. Choose a goal that seems easy to meet.
- Record your goals and progress. If you didn't meet the goal, think about why, and problem-solve for next time.
- Challenges will come up. When possible, have a backup plan. For example, plan for indoor activities when it is rainy or too hot outside.
- If you miss a day or two, no problem. Just get back on track as soon as you can.

#### Additional Resources

- [health.gov/moveyourway](https://health.gov/moveyourway)  
US Department of Health and Human Services