



Bodies in Motion

Americans are eating more calories and burning fewer calories. Adding more physical activity to your day will help you burn more calories and improve your health.



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Americans are eating more calories and burning fewer calories. In fact, we are probably consuming an extra 800 calories per day, on average. If it took 2,000 calories to maintain body weight in 1973, and our activity has decreased by 25 percent, we are burning 500 fewer calories per day. If our intake has increased by about 300 calories per day, we are consuming an extra 800 calories, as shown in the table below.

So a key strategy for managing weight is to increase physical activity in our relatively sedentary lifestyles. Research shows that people who are successful at weight control purposefully are more active during the day and participate in planned physical activity for one hour each day.

Leisure time physical activity levels remained relatively unchanged in recent years, according to the Centers for Disease Control. An analysis of 1992-1994 data from the Na-

tional Human Activity Pattern Survey found our society to be primarily sedentary; leisure time physical activity accounted for only 5 percent of the U.S. population's energy expenditure. Excluding sleeping, the largest contributions to energy expenditure were driving a car, office work, and watching television.

Time usage diaries from 1965 to 1995 suggest that energy expenditure has decreased an estimated 10 to 20 percent, including a 40 percent reduction in time spent preparing food and a 170 percent increase in time spent watching television. Despite a lack of standardized data set to track energy expenditure over time, few would argue that calories expended have declined by at least 25 to 30 percent over the past few decades. The time constraints of modern life with long working hours and commutes to work leave limited time and motivation for leisure time physical activity.



Let's Do the Math

	1973	2003
Calories to maintain weight	2,000	1,500
Decrease in activity		25% (= 500 calories not burned each day)
Increase in calories consumed		300
Extra calories per day		800

Activate Your Life

Most of us don't need to be as physically active as our ancestors were in order to accomplish our daily duties. Appliances, grocery stores, and cars help us have more time to do what we want to do. Start by considering how active you are around the house. Do you regularly go up and down stairs, carry laundry, run the sweeper, clean out closets, or move boxes? Household duties will help keep you in shape. Think about how you get to work. Could you park farther away and take 10 minutes to walk to the office?

Walk a While

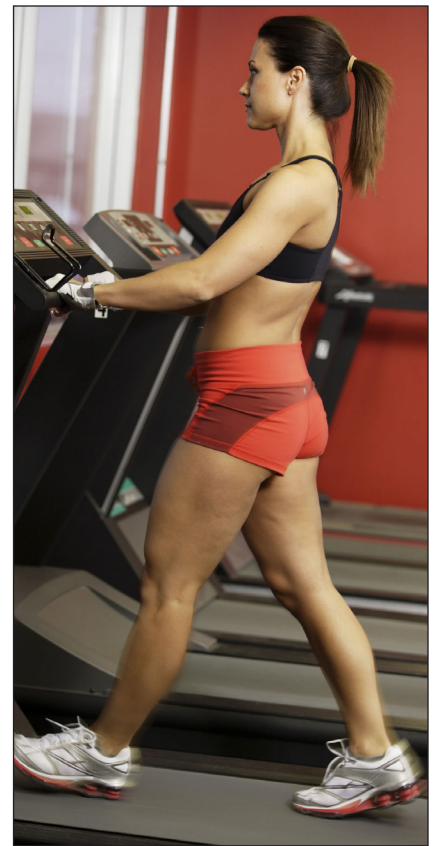
Walking is probably the most popular form of fitness because you can do other things while you walk. Do you need some quiet time by yourself? Walking can give you something most of us need—time to think. Would you like to listen to some music? Walking is ideal for enjoying some tunes. Is there something you need to talk over with someone at work? Do it over a walk. Is there a friend or neighbor you'd like to see more often? Schedule a regular time to walk. On the weekends, make time to get out and enjoy nature. Kentucky State Parks showcase the beauty of the Commonwealth. Walking is good for your health, both mind and body.

Build Some Strength

Building and keeping strong muscles and bones is important for people of all ages and sizes. We also need good aerobic fitness to be able to enjoy life to the fullest. If you have been inactive, you might want to start with something you can do in front of the television or when you wake up, such as a body awareness routine including stretching and toning. Use of weight-resistance equipment (like weight machines or hand weights) can help you maintain bone strength and muscle mass. But you don't need special equipment; you can use canned goods as hand weights. Consider doing some regular exercises that strengthen the core muscle groups in the trunk (abdominal) area of your body. Strong core muscles can help you have better posture and maintain your balance.

Activity Breaks

Do you work at a desk or computer? Do you watch television or read books? If so, you might be able to work activity breaks into your routine. A good goal is to not sit still for more than 30 minutes at a time. At least twice an hour, try to stretch or walk for a few minutes. Activity can be part of a trip to the bathroom, copy machine, or mail room. It can be a trip downstairs to visit with a friend. Give yourself a break.



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Activity for Everyone More of the Time

How long you are moving, your body weight, and the intensity of your movement determine how many calories you burn. It is very easy to be inactive in today's environment. The following guidelines for healthy adults from the Centers for Disease Control may seem unreasonable. Start by learning how much activity you are getting now. Then decide what will work for you to add fitness and **fun** to your days!

Adults need at least:

2 hours and 30 minutes (150 minutes) of **moderate-intensity aerobic activity** (i.e., brisk walking) every week **and** **muscle-strengthening activities** on 2 or more days a week that work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms).

OR

1 hour and 15 minutes (75 minutes) of **vigorous-intensity aerobic activity** (i.e., jogging or running) every week **and** **muscle-strengthening activities** on 2 or more days a week that work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms).

OR

An equivalent mix of **moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic activity and** **muscle-strengthening activities** on 2 or more days a week that work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms).

10 minutes at a time is fine

We know 150 minutes each week sounds like a lot of time, but you don't have to do it all at once. Not only is it best to spread your activity out during the week, but you can break it up into smaller chunks of time during the day. As long as you're doing your activity at a moderate or vigorous effort for at least 10 minutes at a time. Give it a try.

Try going for a 10-minute brisk walk, 3 times a day, 5 days a week. This will give you a total of 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2008. Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. <http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/adults.html> Accessed December 2009.

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Revised 1-2010