

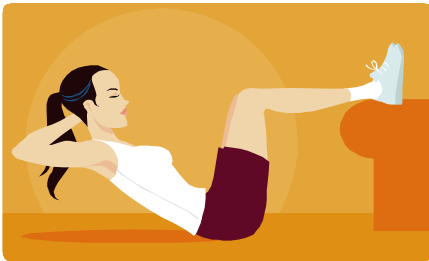
## Resources

<sup>1</sup>Physical Activity Guidelines For Americans: Summary. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. [www.health.gov/paguidelines/guidelines/summary.a.spx](http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/guidelines/summary.a.spx). Accessed December 30, 2009.

The U.S Department of Health & Human Services offers a comprehensive website for the public to implement the new Physical Activity Guidelines: [www.fitness.gov](http://www.fitness.gov).

The website contains:

- The complete Guideline recommendations
- FAQs and answers
- Work books to getting started with exercise
- Activity examples to integrate into your schedule
- Downloadable tables to track your exercise routine



## Introduction

Every New Year many of us resolve to exercise more. The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) issued its first fitness guidelines in October of 2008. The premise for the guidelines is that “regular physical activity (P.A.) over months and years can produce long-term health benefits.”<sup>1</sup> The guidelines are designed so that people can incorporate exercise into their daily plan and engage in activities they enjoy.

This brochure presents the highlights of the guidelines, reviews exercise safety, and outlines fitness center hygiene issues.

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## New Year's Resolutions: Sticking to the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans



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## The Physical Activity Guidelines

To obtain health benefits:

- Engage in at least 150 minutes (2hr 30min) a week of moderate intensity physical activity
- Or: engage in at least 75 minutes (1hr 15min) a week of vigorous intensity aerobic activity
- For additional benefits increase moderate aerobic activity to 300 min (5hr) a week or vigorous activity to 150 (2hr 30min) a week
- Adults: add muscle-strengthening activities on 2 or more days/week
- Children over age 6: engage in at least 60 minutes of moderate or vigorous P.A. daily. This should include muscle-strengthening P.A. on at least 3 days of the week, and bone-strengthening P.A. at least 3 days a week.<sup>1</sup>

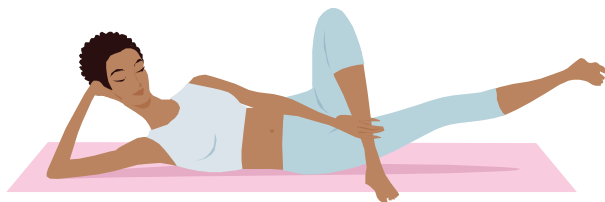
### Examples of Activities

Moderate: Walking briskly, bicycling, tennis (doubles), water aerobics, ballroom or line dancing, gardening (raking, trimming shrubs), baseball, softball, volleyball.

Vigorous: Aerobic dance, biking faster than 10 miles/hr, heavy gardening (digging, hoeing), hiking uphill, race walking, jogging, swimming fast or swimming laps, tennis (singles).

Muscle-strengthening (resistance): lunges, squats, lifting weights, sit-ups, working with resistance bands (long, wide rubber strips that stretch), push-ups.

Bone-strengthening: running, jumping rope, stair-climbing.



## Who Should Follow the Guidelines

- The adult guidelines apply to all adults 18-64 years of age
- Older adults (ages 65 and older), adults with disabilities or chronic medical conditions, and pregnant and postpartum women are all advised to follow the adult guidelines, or be as physically active as their limitations allow



## The Benefits of Exercise

The guidelines stipulate that:

- Some physical activity is better than none
- Both aerobic and muscle-strengthening physical activity are beneficial
- Additional benefits occur with increasing amounts of exercise
- Benefits occur for almost everyone, and far outweigh the possibility of adverse outcomes

Physical activity lowers the risk of:

- Early death
- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Type 2 diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Elevated blood lipids (cholesterol, etc)
- Colon and breast cancer



Physical activity prevents weight gain, and reduces accidental falls and depression.

Physical activity improves cardiorespiratory and muscle fitness, and cognitive function.

## Exercise Safety

If you do not exercise regularly, start slow and build up.

Wear the proper attire and footwear.

If exercising in cold weather outdoors, proper gear recommendations, including skin and eye protection, can be found in the brochure "[Tips for Winter Nutrition & Exercise Practices.](#)" To decrease respiratory distress from the cold dry air, wear a facemask or scarf over your mouth, warm up at a moderate intensity for 15 min, or practice indoor sports like swimming.

Use exercise equipment safely:

- Read the manual or ask for directions from gym personnel
- Use a weight-lifting belt and ask for a spotter
- Keep home gym equipment locked away from young children

## Fitness Center Hygiene

Because of the rise in bacterial infections like MRSA, hygiene has become one of the most important safety issues in fitness centers. Protect yourself and other members by following some simple rules:

- Wipe down equipment before and after use
- Wash your hands or use an alcohol-based sanitizer before and after using gym equipment
- Bring your own water bottle; avoid the water fountain
- Use your own towel to sit on equipment, in the sauna, shower, or pool
- Bring your own exercise mat
- Wear flip-flops in the shower, pool, and sauna
- Take a shower after exercising, or at least put on dry clean clothes. Sweat-soaked clothing can not only lead to hypothermia, but are also excellent bacterial breeding grounds

**Final Thought:** The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans are intended to complement the Dietary Guidelines for Americans ([www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov).) Remember that a sensible diet is also essential to good health.