



Why Get Active. Live Healthy?

Nutrition and Physical Activity Program to Prevent Obesity and Other Chronic Diseases

The Epidemic

- **53%** of Colorado adults are overweight or obese (CDC BRFSS, 2004)
- 16% of non-Hispanic white adults, 21% of non-Hispanic black adults, and 22% of Hispanic adults in Colorado are obese (CDC BRFSS, 2004)
- 23% of low-income children between 2 and 5 years of age in Colorado are overweight or at risk of becoming overweight (CDC PedNSS, 2003)

"The first wealth is health." —Ralph Waldo Emerson

Guess What? People who are inactive can improve their health by becoming moderately active on a regular basis.

The Many Benefits of Regular, Moderate-Intensity Physical Activity include:

- reducing the risk of dying of coronary heart disease, the nation's leading cause of death, and decreasing the risk for stroke, colon cancer, diabetes, and high blood pressure
- helping to control weight; contributing to healthy bones, muscles, and joints; reducing falls among older adults; helping to relieve the pain of arthritis; reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression
- association with fewer hospitalizations, physician visits, and medications

How Active Are American Adults?

- 50% of American adults do not get enough physical activity to provide health benefits
- 25% of adults are not active at all in their leisure time
- Activity decreases with age and is less common among women than men and among those with lower income and less education

Lack of physical activity isn't just a pattern among adults. More than a third of young people in grades 9–12 do not regularly engage in vigorous-intensity physical activity.

The Importance of Physical Activity

The health benefits of regular physical activity are well documented. Research has shown that it can help you —



- Control weight
- Control high blood pressure
- Reduce risk for type 2 diabetes, heart attack, and colon cancer
- Reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety
- Reduce arthritis pain and disability
- Reduce risk for osteoporosis and falls

How Much is Enough?

Adults should get at least 30 minutes of moderately intense physical activity most days, preferably all days of the week.

Children and teenagers should get at least 60 minutes of physical activity most, preferably all days of the week.

Overcoming Barriers

If you have a hard time getting started with regular physical activity, consider the following ways to overcome some common stumbling blocks.

- *Feel you don't have enough time?* Start by doing 10 minutes of physical activity a day and gradually work your way up to 30 minutes. Choose activities that are easy to fit into your everyday routine, such as walking or biking. If you find it hard to be active after work, try an activity before work. Keep a pair of comfortable walking or running shoes in your car and at your office. You'll be ready for activity wherever you go!
- *Can't get motivated?* Plan ahead. Make physical activity a regular part of your schedule. Invite a friend to exercise with you regularly. Join a group that promotes an appealing activity, such as a hiking or walking club.
- *Have no place to be active?* Look around your community for inexpensive, convenient places for physical activity, such as trails, parks, school athletic fields, and community centers.
- *Feel you have no athletic skills?* Choose activities such as walking that require no new skills. You don't need to be an accomplished athlete to enjoy being active. The confidence you gain from simpler activities can inspire you to try new ones.

Tips for Becoming More Active

Adults need recess too! With a little creativity and planning, even a person with the busiest schedule can make room for physical activity. For many people, time before or after work is often available to cycle, walk, or play sports. Think about your weekly or daily schedule and look for or make opportunities to be more active. Consider the following suggestions:

- Walk or cycle to work, school, or the store.
- Park your car or get off the bus about a 10-minute walk away from your destination and walk the remaining distance.
- Take your dog on a long, brisk walk. You'll enjoy it and your dog will too!
- At work, take 10-minute fitness breaks (such as a brisk walk around your office building) instead of taking cigarette or coffee breaks.
- Help a friend with gardening or making home repairs.
- Avoid labor-saving devices. For example, use a push mower instead of a power mower for your lawn.
- Exercise while watching TV. For example, work out with hand weights; ride a stationary bicycle, treadmill, or stair-climber; or perform stretching exercises.
- Dance to your favorite CD at home.
- Get a group of friends together for a weekend morning walk.

Regular physical activity makes important contributions to your health. Take charge of your health by adding more physical activity into your life!

Check Out Ways to Challenge Yourself to “Get Active. Live Healthy.”

The table below provides recommendations on how to increase your physical activity based on your current activity level. Check it out to see where you are and how you can challenge yourself.

If...	Then...
You do not currently engage in regular physical activity,	you should begin by incorporating a few minutes of physical activity into each day, gradually building up to 30 minutes or more of moderate-intensity activities.
You are now active, but at less than the recommended levels,	you should strive to adopt more consistent activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • moderate-intensity physical activity for 30 minutes or more on 5 or more days of the week, or • vigorous-intensity physical activity for 20 minutes or more on 3 or more days of the

	week.
You currently engage in moderate-intensity activities for at least 30 minutes on 5 or more days of the week,	you may achieve even greater health benefits by increasing the time spent or intensity of those activities.
You currently regularly engage in vigorous-intensity activities 20 minutes or more on 3 or more days of the week,	you should continue to do so.

How Active is “active”?

Adults should strive to meet either of the following physical activity recommendations.

- Adults should engage in [moderate-intensity](#) physical activities for at least 30 minutes on 5 or more days of the week.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/American College of Sports Medicine

OR

- Adults should engage in [vigorous-intensity](#) physical activity 3 or more days per week for 20 or more minutes per occasion
– *Healthy People 2010*

What is Moderate Physical Activity?

Moderate-intensity physical activity

Moderate-intensity physical activity refers to a level of effort in which a person should experience:

- Some increase in breathing or heart rate
- a "perceived exertion" of 11 to 14 on the [Borg scale](#)
 - the effort a healthy individual might expend while walking briskly, mowing the lawn, dancing, swimming, or bicycling on level terrain, for example.
- 3 to 6 [metabolic equivalents \(METs\)](#); or
- any activity that burns 3.5 to 7 Calories per minute (kcal/min)

Regular physical activity

A pattern of physical activity is regular if activities are performed:

- most days of the week, preferably daily;

- 5 or more days of the week if moderate-intensity activities (in bouts of at least 10 minutes for a total of at least 30 minutes per day); or
- 3 or more days of the week if vigorous-intensity activities (for at least 20-60 minutes per session).

What is "vigorous-intensity physical activity?"

Vigorous-intensity physical activity

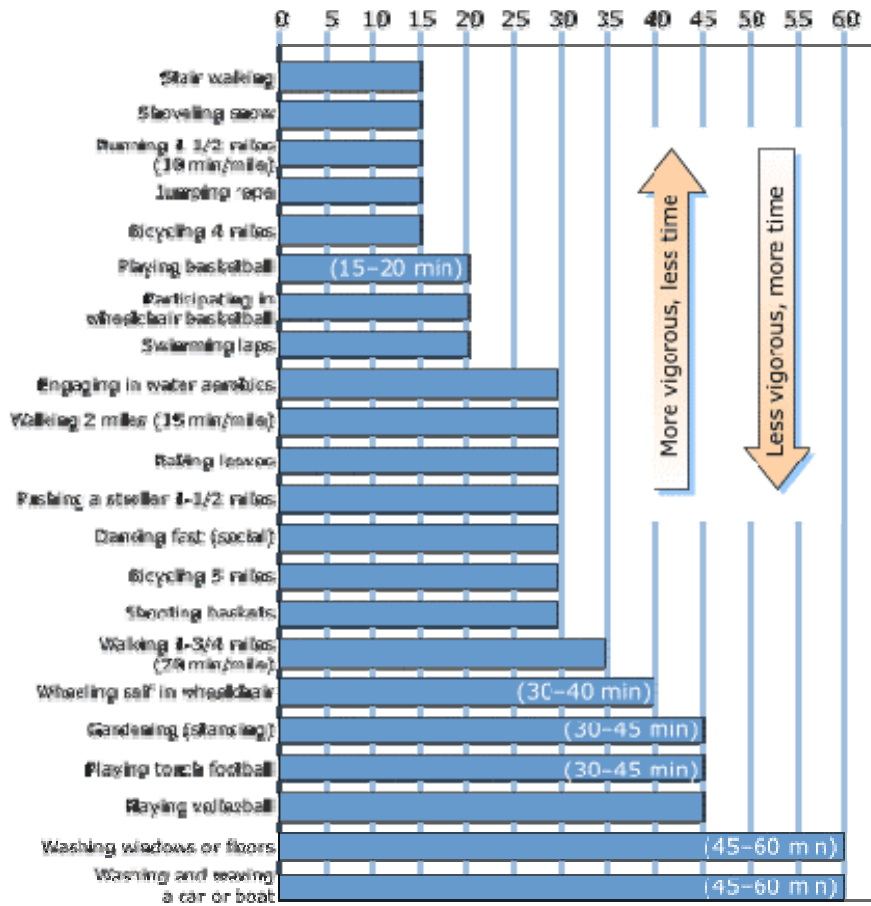
Vigorous-intensity physical activity may be intense enough to represent a substantial challenge to an individual and refers to a level of effort in which a person should experience:

- large increase in breathing or heart rate (conversation is difficult or “broken”)
- a "perceived exertion" of 15 or greater on the [Borg scale](#);
 - the effort a healthy individual might expend while jogging, mowing the lawn with a nonmotorized pushmower, participating in high-impact aerobic dancing, swimming continuous laps, or bicycling uphill, carrying more than 25 lbs up a flight of stairs, standing or walking with more than 50 lbs for example.
- greater than 6 [metabolic equivalent \(METs\)](#); or
- any activity that burns more than 7 kcal/ min

See Chart Below with Examples of Activities

That can Boost Your Intensity Levels

Number of Minutes of Activity Required to Burn 150 kcalories





Tips for Parents

As a parent, you have an important role in shaping your children's physical activity attitudes and behaviors. Here are some tips to encourage your children to be more physically active.

- Set a positive example by leading an active lifestyle yourself, and make physical activity part of your family's daily routine such as designating time for family walks or playing active games together.
- Provide opportunities for children to be active by playing with them. Give them active toys and equipment, and take them to places where they can be active.
- Offer positive reinforcement for the physical activities in which your child participates and encourage them as they express interest in new activities.
- Make physical activity fun. Fun activities can be anything the child enjoys, either structured or non-structured. They may range from team sports, individual sports, and/or recreational activities such as walking, running, skating, bicycling, swimming, playground activities, and free-time play.
- Ensure that the activity is age appropriate and, to ensure safety, provide protective equipment such as helmets, wrist pads, and knee pads.
- Find a convenient place to be active regularly.

Limit the time your children watch television or play video games to no more than two hours per day.

Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/>