

Why Does Physical Activity Matter?



Physical activity or exercise is a key ingredient for success in losing weight and maintaining a healthy weight. It has even been added to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Pyramid at www.mypyramid.gov.

Physical activity can help you lose weight and maintain a healthy weight in several ways:

- It burns calories that otherwise would be stored in your body as fat.
- It burns fat that your body has already stored.
- It helps build muscle, which burns more calories than fat 24 hours a day.
- It helps to reduce the sensation of hunger so you eat less.

Quite simply, the odds are better for losing weight or maintaining a healthy weight if you make increased physical activity a part of your lifestyle.

Other Health Benefits

Physical activity provides numerous other health benefits besides weight control.

- Reduce the risk of heart disease.
- Control cholesterol levels.
- Prevent bone loss and osteoporosis.
- Increase energy, strength, endurance, and flexibility.
- Support and strengthen your immune system.

Hate to Exercise?

Let's forget about the word "exercise" for a while. *Any* increase in physical activity is healthy – whether it be brisk walking, mowing the grass, vigorous housework, washing your car, or raking leaves. And, the activity doesn't have to be done all at once –if you can't walk for 30 minutes at one time, three 10-minute walks are nearly as good.

Moderate activity increases your heart rate enough for you to notice and causes you to break into a light sweat, but you can still carry on a conversation comfortably. Brisk walking is an example of moderate activity.

Vigorous activity causes you to sweat and breathe hard, and prevents you from carrying on a conversation comfortably. Running, fast bicycling, and using an elliptical exercise machine are examples of vigorous activity.

Barriers That Stop People from Getting More Physical Activity

People who aren't physically active typically have a reason for their inactivity. For example, they may say they don't have time or they just don't like it. But no matter what the reason, it's possible to find a type of physical activity that works for you. Here are some suggestions.

It's inconvenient; I don't have time

Find ways to fit physical activity into your schedule. Schedule it as an appointment on your calendar. Exercise while you do some other task.

It's boring; I don't enjoy exercise

Find activities you *do* enjoy. Vary your physical activities. Exercise with someone else or with your pet. Join a sports team or take an exercise class.

It's hard to keep it up

It takes a little while for some of the rewards of physical activity to kick in such as feeling and looking better and losing pounds. So why not build in your own reward system? Treat yourself to a little luxury every now and then.

I'm too overweight and out of shape

Start slowly. You can be active at any size and benefit from it. Know that you are reaping some of the health rewards mentioned earlier long before the scale shows it. Focus on the many ways besides weight loss that physical activity can improve your health.

I've tried and failed before

It takes at least four to six weeks before aerobic capacity is improved. Set small, reachable goals. Focusing on small steps that you can manage will eventually help lead you to your ultimate goal.

I hate jogging (weight-lifting, treadmills, sit-ups, etc.)

You don't have to jog (or whatever activity you *don't* want to do) to be physically fit. *Any* physical movement is better than none at all. Pick what you are most comfortable with – walking, dancing, roller skating, cycling, swimming, etc.

It's painful

If the type of physical activity you're doing hurts you, you're doing something wrong. Check your technique, consult your doctor or a certified personal trainer, or find something less strenuous. Bicycling, swimming, and walking are examples of low impact activities that are easier on your body.

I work hard and I'm tired when I get home

You can fit some physical activity into your routine starting from the time you get up in the morning. Another good strategy is to spend a half hour or so doing something restful and relaxing after work. This can help you feel rejuvenated and help to renew your energy for your evening.



Barriers That Stop People from Getting More Physical Activity

Do any of these sound familiar to you? If so, don't let excuses get in the way of living a healthy lifestyle and reaching your weight loss goals.

Although increasing your physical activity will require hard work and dedication, the benefits you gain will far outweigh the amount of effort you put in. If you find the right activity, you just may end up enjoying yourself!

Build in Rewards



Time and again, research has found that rewarding yourself for successive steps toward your behavior-change goals can help to assure your success. Steer away from food as a reward. Instead of cheesecake, how about treating yourself to a movie, a new music CD, a fishing trip, a babysitter for some time out with a friend, or a trip to the spa? Try the following exercise to get you started.

List six ways you can reward yourself: two small rewards for small steps; two medium-size rewards for larger steps; and two major rewards for major milestones:

List six ways you can reward yourself: two small rewards for small steps; two medium-size rewards for larger steps; and two large rewards for major milestones:

Small Rewards

1. _____
2. _____

Medium-Size Rewards

3. _____
4. _____

Large Rewards

5. _____
6. _____

The importance of physical activity

We are all happier, more productive individuals when we stay engaged in activities we find fun and enjoyable. The following activities are examples of how to become and stay physically active:

- Check out the nature hikes and parks in your own town
- Walk the dog
- Wash your car instead of going to a carwash
- Go fishing
- Swimming, and do water aerobics
- Clean your house at a brisk pace
- Work in your garden or rake the leaves
- Cut the grass with a push lawn mower instead of a riding lawn mower
- Play miniature golf
- Take nature walks
- Plan family outings around physical activities such as canoeing, skiing, etc.
- Walk or bike to do errands that are not too far away
- Fly a kite
- Go skiing or snowboarding
- Take the stairs rather than the elevator
- Join a fitness class such as Yoga or Pilates, etc.
- Go for a jog
- Coach a youth's sports team and participate in the sport while coaching
- Exercise on your lunch hour with a co-worker
- Go climbing on a climbing wall
- Replace coffee or smoking breaks at work with walking breaks
- Exercise over your lunch break
- Go golfing and walk the course rather than renting a cart
- Join intramural sports teams such as softball, volleyball, basketball, etc.
- Go rollerblading
- Go for a bike ride
- Join a gym
- Park your car on the far side of the parking lot
- Play a game of tag with your kids
- Keep a resistance band at your desk
- Go dancing
- Play tennis with a friend

Your Activity Log



Use this Activity Log to track the amount of physical activity you do each day. Make copies of it so you can reuse it as often as necessary. And remember...activity doesn't have to be strenuous or vigorous – even household chores count as being physically active!

Day 1

<i>What did you do?</i>	<i>How long did you do it for?</i>	<i>Total number of minutes today</i>

Day 2

<i>What did you do?</i>	<i>How long did you do it for?</i>	<i>Total number of minutes today</i>

Day 3

<i>What did you do?</i>	<i>How long did you do it for?</i>	<i>Total number of minutes today</i>

Day 4

<i>What did you do?</i>	<i>How long did you do it for?</i>	<i>Total number of minutes today</i>

Day 5

<i>What did you do?</i>	<i>How long did you do it for?</i>	<i>Total number of minutes today</i>

Day 6

<i>What did you do?</i>	<i>How long did you do it for?</i>	<i>Total number of minutes today</i>

Day 7

<i>What did you do?</i>	<i>How long did you do it for?</i>	<i>Total number of minutes today</i>

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Telephone Seminar Evaluation

Please complete this form and fax it to 1.952.996.2702, or email it to eshcomments@cigna.com

Your company: _____

Seminar date: _____ Company city, state: _____

Presenter: _____ Title of seminar: _____

Please state your agreement/disagreement with the following statement using this scale.

4 Strongly Agree	3 Agree	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree
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1. SEMINAR CONTENT:

- | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| a. The information I received was helpful. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| b. The seminar met the stated objectives. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

2. SPEAKER EVALUATION:

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. The speaker presented the information clearly. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| b. The speaker responded well to participants. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| c. The speaker was knowledgeable on the subject. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

3. Overall I was satisfied with the seminar presentation. 4 3 2 1

4. What part(s) of the seminar did you like best, and why?

5. What part(s) of the seminar did you like least, and why?