

## Exercise: Finding Activities That Work for You



### What do you enjoy?

Some people like to run, take classes at the gym, or shoot hoops. But what others do to stay active may not work for you. Maybe you can't afford to join a gym, or you hate being indoors. Or maybe you have injuries that make some activities difficult.

The key to making fitness a lifelong habit that improves your health is to find an activity you like. If you enjoy it, you're more likely to keep doing it.

### What fits your lifestyle?

An important part of choosing an activity is having your own reason for wanting to be active. It's not always easy to make activity a regular part of your life. Taking the time to think about what motivates or inspires you will help you stay with it.

### Do you like to be with others?

Joining a group or a class can help keep you motivated. Or you may be more likely to stay with an activity or exercise if you do it alone.

### Do you like to compete?

Some people do better if they have someone to compete with—even if that someone is themselves.

Others do better when there's no competition to worry about. For example, you might choose gardening or dancing instead of team sports or tennis if you don't like competition.

### Do you need a mental challenge?

Team sports exercise your brain as well as your body. Bicycling requires you to pay close attention to your surroundings and where you're headed. If you'd rather shut off your brain and let your body do the work, try raking leaves.

### Are you on a budget?

You can walk around your neighborhood without spending any money. Exercise DVDs involve a small one-time cost or a trip to the public library. You may be able to join a community yoga or tai chi class for a small fee. Wait until you know that you really enjoy the activity before you spend the money.

### How much exercise do you need?

To feel your best, you need at least 2½ hours of moderate activity a week. Brisk walking is an example. But any activities—including daily chores—that raise your heart rate can be included. It's fine to be active in blocks of 10 minutes or more throughout your day and week.

## What are some of your choices?

Moderate activity can help improve your health. If improving fitness is your goal, include some vigorous activity. Talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program.

Activity ideas		
	Moderate intensity	Vigorous intensity
General exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brisk walking</li> <li>• Light to moderate calisthenics (for example, home exercises or back exercises)</li> <li>• Low-impact aerobic dancing</li> <li>• Weight lifting, body building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jogging or running</li> <li>• Walking uphill</li> <li>• Heavy calisthenics (push-ups, sit-ups, jumping jacks)</li> <li>• High-impact aerobic dancing</li> </ul>
Water exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treading water with moderate effort</li> <li>• Water aerobics or water calisthenics</li> <li>• Kayaking, canoeing, paddle boating</li> <li>• Springboard or platform diving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swimming laps with fast, vigorous effort</li> <li>• Treading water with fast, vigorous effort</li> <li>• Water jogging</li> <li>• Skin diving and scuba diving</li> </ul>
Outdoor activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fishing and hunting</li> <li>• Children's games, like hopscotch, 4-square, and dodge ball</li> <li>• Downhill skiing</li> <li>• Shoveling snow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Horseback riding (trotting or galloping)</li> <li>• Competitive sports like rugby, field hockey, and soccer</li> <li>• Mountain biking</li> <li>• Snowshoeing and cross-country skiing</li> </ul>
House and yard work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sweeping, vacuuming, and mopping floors</li> <li>• Mowing or raking the lawn</li> <li>• Digging in the garden</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carrying groceries upstairs</li> <li>• Carrying boxes or furniture</li> <li>• Baling hay or cleaning the barn with vigorous effort</li> </ul>