

Surgeon General

The guideline for physical activity from the U.S. Surgeon General is to accumulate 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity on five or more days of the week. Moderate intensity is when you get warm and slightly out of breath, and accumulate means you can do it in bouts of 10 or 15 minutes throughout the day. That's good news for people who have limited time or just need to get started. Keep in mind that any physical activity is better than none, and getting started is the first important step.

Tips for increasing physical activity

Move More - Make it a daily challenge to find ways to walk. Climb stairs if given a choice between that and escalators or elevators. Walk your dog; chase your kids; toss balls with friends, mow the lawn. Anything that moves your limbs is not only a fitness tool; it's a stress buster. Think 'move' in small increments of time. It doesn't have to be an hour-long walk or 45-minutes on the treadmill. But that's great when you're up to it. Meanwhile, move more. Thought for the day: Cha, Cha, Cha... Then do it!

- Plan active weekends (long walks, hiking, walking tours)
- Take stairs instead of the elevator
- Park at the far end of the parking lot
- Walk a few blocks before getting on the bus
- Get off the bus a few blocks before your stop
- Get up from your desk throughout the day to stretch and walk
- Take a 10-minute walk before lunch
- Walk your dog
- Walk instead of drive your car short distances

Mark Fenton, author of *The Complete Guide to walking for Health, Weight Loss and Fitness*, offered these tips on walking:

- * Consider walking with a friend.
- * Try to use the sidewalk or designated trails. If you cannot, walk facing traffic on the left side of the road.
- * Carry spare change and your ID in case of an emergency.
- * Don't let the weather stop you. Dress as if it's 10 degrees warmer than it really is. If you're being active, you'll heat up. Dress in layers so you can adjust as you go.
- * If you're walking in a loop, walk against the wind's direction, so you can walk with it at your back returning to your starting point.

* Most manufacturers make athletic walking shoes that are more flexible at the forefoot than running shoes. They also have more rounded heels, which helps prevent sore shins.