

New Guidelines for Physical Activity

Joint Release from the American College of Sports Medicine and the American Heart Association

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The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) and the American Heart Association (AHA) released in August 2007 new recommendations for physical activity to promote health. The recommendations are divided into two groups—those for healthy adults under the age of 65 and those for healthy adults over the age of 65. These recommendations don't apply to individuals with *chronic health conditions*.

Here are the recommendations for healthy adults *under* the age of 65:

- Do moderately intense cardio activities 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week, or
- Do vigorously intense cardio activities 20 minutes a day, 3 days a week, and
- Do 8 to 10 strength training exercises, 8 to 12 repetitions each exercise, 2 times a week

Here are the recommendations for healthy adults *over* the age of 65:

- Do moderately intense aerobic exercise 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week, or
- Do vigorously intense aerobic exercise 20 minutes a day, 3 days a week, and
- Do 8 to 10 strength training exercises, 10 to 15 repetitions each exercise, 2-3 times a week, and
- If you are at risk of falling, perform balance exercises, and
- Have a physical activity plan

Why are these new recommendations so important? They address improvement in *functional health*. This means improvements in crucial areas such as body weight, blood pressure, blood lipids (cholesterol, triglycerides, HDL, and LDL), blood glucose, and heart health.

If *weight loss* is your primary goal, you should increase your daily activity to 60 to 90 minutes of light to moderate activity.

What is considered *moderate activity*? Moderate activity is strenuous enough that you break a sweat but you can still carry on a conversation. Moderate activities include brisk walking, swimming, biking, hiking, team sports such as playing basketball or soccer, and various household chores such as vacuuming, cutting the lawn (walking), gardening, and similar types of physical exertion.

Moderate and intense aerobic activities should be done in addition to your daily living activities.

Note that more strengthening activity is recommended for those over 65 because of the loss in muscle mass that normally occurs after this age. Among other effects, loss of muscle can impact balance. Maintaining good balance is critical in preventing falls. This makes strengthening activities no less than essential for this age group.

Remember! These are minimum requirements. Younger individuals can do strengthening activities more than two times a week and can begin engaging in balance activities as well.

Over 65? Consider working with a health/exercise professional to design a physical activity program that is safe for you—and within the recommended guidelines.

For more detailed information on how to get started, check out *Move It. Lose It. Live Healthy.: The Simple Truth About Achieving & Maintaining a Healthy Body Weight*.

Works Consulted

Haskell, WL, Lee, JM, Pate, RR, et al. Physical Activity and Public Health: Updated Recommendation for Adults from the American College of Sports Medicine and the American Heart Association. *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*. 2007; 8:1423-1434.

Nelson, MR, Rejeski, WJ, Blair, SN, et al. Physical Activity and Public Health in Older Adults: Recommendation from the American College of Sports Medicine and the American Heart Association. *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*. 2007; 8:1435-1445.