



# EXERCISE FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY



This talk emphasizes the importance of regular exercise, both for long-term health and for safety on the job and provides tips for starting a new exercise routine.

**Materials to have on hand:**

Centers for *Disease Control Physical Guidelines for Americans* document

**Items for attendees to consider during the talk:**

- Do you know the recommended amount of exercise for healthy adults?
- What are the health and safety benefits of an active lifestyle?
- What are some simple ways to work exercise into your daily routine?

## TALK

It's probably not news to you that regular exercise is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. But between work obligations, family commitments, and everything else on your plate, sometimes it can seem like there aren't enough hours in the day to accomplish the bare minimum, let alone fit in an exercise routine. If you start small and gradually work more movement into your day, though, you can develop a more active lifestyle that will pay off in many ways.

Consider some of these health benefits of regular exercise:

- Better sleep at night and concentration during the day
- Lower risk for heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and many other ailments
- Better mental health and a lower risk for anxiety and depression
- Prevention of unhealthy weight gain

And, if you're still not convinced, consider the many ways in which an active lifestyle can improve your everyday life. Routine tasks like climbing stairs and carrying groceries will become easier. You'll improve your balance and coordination, which lowers your risk of slipping or falling and injuring yourself. If your job involves lifting or other physically demanding tasks, regular exercise can improve your strength and endurance so that you'll be less likely to hurt yourself on the job.

You might be surprised by how small of a time commitment you need to get started. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or the CDC, recommends that healthy adults between the ages of 18 and 64 get at least 2½ hours of moderate-intensity aerobic activity weekly or 1 hour and 15 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity weekly. For moderate exercise, that's just 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week, and for vigorous exercise, that's just

*Continued on page 2*

**Talk Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Attendees:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisor/  
Presenter:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

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15 minutes a day, 5 days a week. Of course, more exercise is better, but you'll gain substantial health benefits even at the minimum.

Some examples of ways to get moderate-intensity exercise include:

- Brisk walking,
- Some forms of yoga,
- Recreational swimming,
- Bicycling slower than 10 miles per hour on flat terrain,
- General yardwork and gardening, and
- Exercise classes like water aerobics.

Vigorous-intensity aerobic activities include things like:

- Running,
- Swimming laps,
- Bicycling faster than 10 miles per hour,
- Jumping rope,
- Heavy yardwork,
- Hiking uphill,
- High-intensity interval training, and
- Exercise classes like indoor cycling or kickboxing.

One thing to note about these activities is that many of them can fit into your day without much adjustment to your schedule. Your exercise doesn't need to be in long, uninterrupted blocks. All activity that is at the right intensity counts, whether it's an hour-long hike or several shorter walks over the course of a day or week.

Of course, you may experience a particular activity as more or less intense depending on how active you are currently. One way to gauge whether you are exercising at the right intensity is to use the talk test. The goal for moderate exercise is to be able to talk, but not sing, during the activity. For vigorous exercise, you generally are not able to say more than a few words at a time without pausing to catch your breath.

In addition to aerobic exercise, it's also important to incorporate muscle-strengthening activities such as lifting weights, doing body-weight exercises like push-ups and planks, or heavy gardening. The CDC recommends muscle-strengthening activities for all the major muscle groups of the body at least 2 days a week.

If you're just beginning a new exercise routine, remember to start small and increase gradually. That way, you'll be less likely to injure yourself and more likely to develop a sustainable, long-term habit.

