



Live Healthy Georgia

Seniors Taking Charge

Physically Fit for February

February 2013

By Whitney Bignell, MS, RD, LD

As you continue working on your S.M.A.R.T. goals, don't forget to include physical activity in your healthy living plan. Many people think that being physically fit requires a gym membership and commitment of at least 2 – 3 hours each day. However, physical activity can be any movement that raises your heart rate, improves flexibility and balance, or strengthens your muscles. Keep reading for tips to be more physically active.

Benefits of Physical Activity



There are many health benefits of physical activity, including:

- Improve mental health and mood
- Improve ability to do daily activities and prevent falls
- Control weight
- Decrease risk for some cancers

How much physical activity do I need?

- Older adults should be moderately active (i.e., brisk walking) at least 150 minutes each week, or vigorously active (i.e., jogging) 75 minutes each week.
- Older adults should also include muscle-strengthening exercises for all muscle groups at least twice per week.
- Older adults at risk for falls should include balance training exercises at least twice per week.
- If you have not been physically active or have a chronic health condition, be sure to talk to your doctor about how much exercise is right for you.
- Overall, adults should *avoid physical inactivity*. There are many exercises that you can modify if you have a disability and/or limited mobility. Talk to your doctor or consult an exercise specialist.

How intense are you?

Intensity is based on your perception of how hard you're working. On a scale of 1-10 where 1 is resting and 10 is working as hard as possible, moderate activity is about 5-6 and vigorous activity is 7-10. You can also use the talk test to measure intensity. You will be able to talk but not sing during moderate activity, but may only speak short words exercising vigorously.

Ten Minutes at a Time

If you are not already physically active, 30 minutes per day may seem overwhelming! However, most people can manage 10 minutes of activity at a time. Here are ten tips to help you be more physically active, ten minutes at a time:

1. Walk around the parking lot before going into a store.
2. Walk around the mall before starting to shop.
3. Find a co-worker to walk to and from a nearby restaurant for lunch.
4. Using soup cans or dumbbells, do bicep curls and squats while watching a favorite television show.
5. Turn on your favorite music and dance while waiting for water to boil for pasta or rice.
6. Walk your dog around the neighborhood.
7. Vacuum the floors (yes, housework counts, too!)
8. Arrive for an appointment fifteen minutes early to park farther away and take the stairs instead of the elevator.
9. Bring one bag of groceries in at a time.
10. Walk to and from your mailbox three or more times when getting the mail.



Physically Demanding (and fun!)

- Ballroom dancing
- Gardening
- Hiking
- Swimming
- Water aerobics
- Zumba
- Canoeing
- Yoga or pilates
- Biking

S.M.A.R.T. Goal: Physical Activity

I will _____ (activity) every _____ (day or days per week) for _____ minutes for _____ weeks.
Make sure that your goal is attainable and relevant for your health goals.

Reference

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Physical Activity. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/>

Pictures

- <http://static.guim.co.uk/sys-images/Lifeandhealth/Pix/pictures/2009/6/11/1244719002038/Older-man-exercising-001.jpg>
- http://smchealth.org/sites/default/files/pictures/COM/PeopleStretching_iStock_000017598565Small.JPG
- <http://blairpedersen.files.wordpress.com/2012/02/old-guy-dancing.jpg>