

# get active

for your health



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“If exercise could be packed in a pill, it would be the single most widely prescribed and beneficial medication in the nation.”

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- ROBERT BUTLER, MD



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Being physically active is one of the most important things you can do for yourself. Exercising has many benefits. No matter what your age, size, or level of fitness, your body needs to move!

### Benefits of aerobic exercise

- Helps prevent diabetes
- Decreases blood pressure
- Decreases the risk of heart disease
- Decreases the risk of Alzheimer's disease and dementia
- Increases energy
- Helps control weight
- Improves sleep
- Improves mood and decreases depression as much as medication
- May decrease the risk of some cancers, such as colon and breast
- Helps prevent reoccurrence of some cancers

It's recommended adults get at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity 5 or more days of the week. You have taken the first step toward increasing your physical activity by reading this booklet.

### **Ask yourself these questions to help you decide whether being more active is important to you.**

- What are my reasons to exercise?
- Is it worth the effort?
- Can I really do it?

On a scale of 0 to 10, how important is it to you to increase your physical activity?



### Not very important (score 0 to 3)

Even if you don't feel it's important right now, it may be helpful to keep reading this booklet so you can learn more about how exercise can improve your health. Also read the Barrier Busting section that starts on page 5.

### Somewhat important (score 4 to 6)

Answer the following questions to help you identify your reasons to exercise.

What are the advantages of being more active?

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How would physical activity benefit you?

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What might keep you from doing physical activity?

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### It's very important to me! (score 7 to 10)

Congratulations! This booklet will help you get started. Setting a personal action plan will also help you take action. Read on for more information.

## WHAT IS AEROBIC EXERCISE?

Aerobic exercise uses large muscle groups such as your arms and legs, and it burns fat and sugar for energy. It increases your heart and breathing rate. Examples:

Brisk walking	Hiking	Basketball
Jogging	Biking	Tennis
Swimming	Dancing	Rollerblading or roller skating

### Getting started

Go slow at the start of a new physical activity program. To help avoid injury, start out slowly to give your muscles a chance to warm up. End with a 5- to 10-minute cooldown by gradually slowing your pace. For example, if your exercise of choice is a fast walk, walk slowly for 5 minutes at the beginning and end of your workout.

Use the **FIT** guidelines below as a goal and to get the most out of your aerobic workout.

**F**

Frequency: Exercise most days of the week.

**I**

Intensity: Aim for a moderate level of intensity. Moderate intensity means exercising hard enough to make you breathe deeply and sweat a little, but you can still carry on a conversation.

**T**

Time: Exercise for at least 30 minutes. You can also do two 15-minute or three 10-minute sessions in a day.

For more information on exercise, go to [kp.org/healthengagement/exercise](http://kp.org/healthengagement/exercise).

## OTHER PARTS OF A FITNESS PROGRAM

Strength and flexibility exercises are also an important part of your fitness program. They help balance some of the changes that occur with aging, such as loss of muscle mass and decreased flexibility.

### Strength training

Strength training, such as weight lifting, builds muscle tone and strength. It improves posture and helps you avoid injury to your bones and muscles. Aim for 20 minutes of strength training exercises at least 2 days a week. Work all the major muscle groups. Wait 48 hours before you work a muscle group again.

### Flexibility

Stretching every day increases your flexibility and helps decrease the risk of muscle strain and injury. Spend 5 to 10 minutes each day stretching the major muscle groups. Move slowly as you stretch each muscle. Stretch until you feel a slight pulling sensation, but not pain. Breathe as you stretch, and hold the stretch for at least 20 seconds.





## **BARRIER BUSTING**

### **So why don't you do it?**

We all have reasons why we don't exercise. Look at this list of common barriers:

- "I don't have time to exercise."
- "I'm too tired to exercise."
- "I have a bad back, knee, etc."
- "I just don't like to exercise."
- "The weather is bad. It's too hot, too cold, or too rainy."
- "My neighborhood is not safe to walk or exercise outside."
- "I don't have the money to join a gym."
- "It's dark outside when I get home from work."

Now check out some strategies to help you overcome the barriers (some strategies work for more than one barrier):

- Do 3 bouts of exercise for 10 minutes each, instead of one 30-minute bout.
- Park your car farther away and walk.
- Take the stairs.
- Schedule time on your calendar.
- Take a walk break at work.
- Walk, dance, stretch, or lift weights while watching TV.
- Combine physical activity with social events, such as a picnic that includes a hike.
- If you feel tired, start with just 5 minutes, and then see if you have the energy to do more.
- Do activities that are easier on your body, such as water aerobics, swimming, or chair dancing.
- If you do not like the exercise you are doing, it is hard to keep it up. Plan activities with your family and friends to have fun, spend quality time together, and stay on track.
- Walk in a mall, or go up and down stairs.
- Jump on a trampoline.
- Dance in your home.
- Use a stationary bike or treadmill at home.
- Buy weights or stretch bands, or use common household objects such as cans, and work out at home.
- Walk with a flashlight and a friend.
- Get up early and exercise before you go to work.



## ADDITIONAL TIPS

- If you have a health problem like heart disease, high blood pressure, or diabetes, ask your doctor about the type and amount of physical activity that is right for you. In most cases, you do not need to talk to your doctor before starting an activity like walking.
- If you don't feel well, slow or stop exercise.
- If you develop any unusual symptoms while you are exercising (such as pain or shortness of breath), stop exercising and see your doctor before you exercise again.
- **If you have continuous pain or pressure in your chest, neck, arm, or jaw during exercise, stop and call 911.**
- Drink plenty of water when you exercise in hot weather.
- Wear supportive, comfortable shoes when you exercise.
- If you use a pedometer or tracking device or app, work up to 10,000 steps a day.
- Make an effort to move more each day:
  - Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
  - Park your car farther away and walk.
  - Walk to do errands.
  - Add 10-minute bouts of exercise throughout the day.

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“Just getting going—  
getting off the couch—is the biggest step.”

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- ROBERT SALLIS, MD, Kaiser Permanente family physician,  
and past president, American College of Sports Medicine

## EXERCISE VITALS

When you visit your Kaiser Permanente doctor, you may be asked about your level of physical activity. We call this Exercise Vitals.

- How many days a week are you doing moderate to strenuous exercise?
- On average, how many minutes do you exercise at this level?

Use these guidelines to help you answer the questions.

Activity level	What is it?
<b>Light</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Not sweating</li><li>• Not breathing hard</li></ul>	Slow walking or dancing, yoga, ping pong, bowling
<b>Moderate</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A light sweat</li><li>• Can talk, but can't sing</li></ul>	Dancing, swimming, walking fast, biking, mowing the lawn
<b>Strenuous</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sweating</li><li>• Breathing hard</li><li>• Can't talk or sing</li></ul>	Jogging, high-impact aerobic dancing, biking uphill, swimming laps

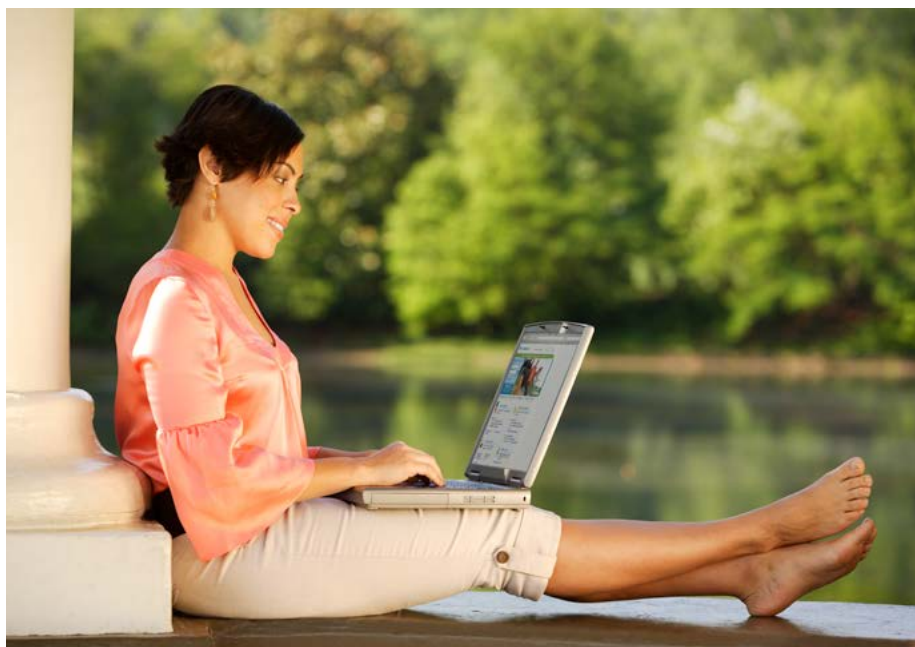
## KAISER PERMANENTE RESOURCES

Kaiser Permanente has many resources to help you increase your physical activity. Learn more at [kp.org/healthengagement/exercise](https://kp.org/healthengagement/exercise).



## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Check out the community resources in your area, such as your local YMCA, park, or senior center.



## WEBSITES

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

**[cdc.gov/physicalactivity](https://cdc.gov/physicalactivity)**

The Movement to Get America Moving: **[everybodywalk.org](https://everybodywalk.org)**

President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition: **[fitness.gov](https://fitness.gov)**

America's Move to Raise a Healthier Generation of Kids

(has search engines to find local trails and parks for families):

**[letsmove.gov](https://letsmove.gov)**

## MY PERSONAL ACTION PLAN

Action plans are short-term plans that help you reach your goal of increased physical activity. They can greatly improve your chances of success. Action plans include a specific action or behavior that you want to do and know that you will be able to do. Your plan must answer the questions *What?*, *How much?*, *When?*, and *How many?*

### Example:

This week I will walk (*what*) for 20 minutes (*how much*) before lunch (*when*) three times on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday (*how many*).

This week I will:

(*What*) \_\_\_\_\_

(*How much*) \_\_\_\_\_

(*When*) \_\_\_\_\_

(*How many*) \_\_\_\_\_

How confident are you that you will succeed with your plan?



0 = not confident at all

10 = totally confident

Your confidence level should be 7 or higher.

If your confidence level is lower than 7, think about changing your action plan.

Did you complete your action plan?

Yes  No

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Congratulations on taking this important step to improve your health and wellness!**



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**“If there were one single thing you could do to dramatically improve your health, there is no doubt it would be exercise.”**

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- ROBERT SALLIS, MD, Kaiser Permanente family physician, and past president, American College of Sports Medicine







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