What is Physical Activity?

You may have heard that exercise and physical activity are good for you. Regular physical activity can help keep you healthy and active as you age. It can also help with many long-term health issues. And you can even enjoy it, especially with family and friends.

WHY IS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GOOD FOR ME?

Being active has many benefits. When you are physically active and exercise regularly, you are decreasing your risk for illnesses like:

- ❑ Heart disease
- ❑ Stroke
- ❑ Blood pressure
- ❑ High cholesterol
- ❑ Diabetes
- ❑ Obesity
- ❑ Breast cancer
- ❑ Colon cancer
- ❑ Anxiety
- ❑ Depression

If you already have any of these, physical activity and exercise can help you control your illness. Being active can also help you feel better and sleep better.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY?

The three major kinds of exercise are aerobic exercise, strengthening, and flexibility training. Aerobic activity raises your heart rate and makes you breathe faster. Walking/jogging and swimming are good examples. Lifting weights is an example of strengthening. Flexibility training includes stretching or yoga. This is especially important for older people. You should try to do all three types of exercise every week.

HOW MUCH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY SHOULD I TRY TO DO?

You don't need a gym membership to exercise—you can do it in your home or neighborhood. Adults need at least 2 hours and 30 minutes (150 minutes) of moderate activity every week and two days a week of strength training. That may sound like a lot but don't worry! You can break that time up however you want, as long as you spend more than 10 minutes at a time with each activity. If you are new to exercise, remember to start slowly and work your way up. You should also spend less time sitting every day! Too much time sitting increases your risk of health problems. Having breaks every hour to walk or go up the stairs for a few minutes is helpful.

For more information, scan the QR code below, or visit nciph.org/physical_activity

WHAT CAN I DO TO BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE?

- ❑ Take the stairs instead of an elevator
- ❑ Garden
- ❑ Mow the lawn
- ❑ Walk your dog

WHAT CAN I DO TO EXERCISE?

Here are some aerobic activities that will and increase your heart rate:

- ❑ Swimming
- ❑ Hiking
- ❑ Running and jogging
- ❑ Bicycling
- ❑ Yoga
- ❑ Dancing

Here are ways to strengthen your muscles:

- ❑ Lifting weights
- ❑ Using resistance bands

IS EXERCISE SAFE FOR ME?

If you have not been active for a very long time, you might want to talk with your healthcare professional about how to start. If you get short of breath or have chest pain at any time, stop exercising and contact your healthcare professional.

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