

Your Guide to
**Physical
Activity**

Let's
Get
Active!





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It's Time to Get Active

Do these situations sound familiar?

"I always feel tired and worn out."

"Walking two flights of stairs makes me breathless."

"My spouse and children are putting on weight."



Everyone can be physically active. Make physical activity your answer to feeling tired, out of breath and out of shape.

Being active not only helps you look good and feel good, it also allows you to enjoy a better quality of life. No matter how old you are or unfit you feel, you can benefit from an active lifestyle.

Physical activity:

- Gives you more energy
- Reduces stress and anxiety
- Promotes heart and lung fitness
- Keeps bones and muscles strong
- Helps maintain a healthy weight
- Reduces the risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, stroke and certain cancers
- Helps you stay independent as you grow older

It is never too late to start. Take the first step now and get active!

What is Physical Activity?

Physical activity is any activity that gets your body moving. It includes daily activities such as taking the stairs and doing housework as well as leisure activities such as jogging and swimming.



Every effort counts

If you have not been physically active, start slowly. Think how you can include physical activity into your daily routine, whether at home, at work or during your leisure time.

You can begin with the following:

- Take the stairs instead of the lift.
- Get off the bus one or two stops before your destination and walk the rest of the way.
- Park the car further away from your destination.
- Go for a walk after dinner with your family.
- Wash your car instead of sending it to the carwash.
- Do housework like mopping the floor.
- Go trekking at nature reserves and parks.

Every excuse counts

You know physical activity is good for you. So what is holding you back? Excuses! Here's how you can deal with them:

Excuse	Solution
I'm too busy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Try a 10-min brisk walk to your lunch venue or to the MRT station.• Exercise while you are watching TV programmes.
I'm too tired.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get active! Feel the difference – you will be refreshed and energised after your activity.• For a start, do three 10-minute segments of physical activity a day.
I'm too lazy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get a family member, friend or colleague to motivate you.• Join an interest group or club where members count on you to show up.
I might get injured.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Choose activities that are suitable for your age and fitness level.• Start slowly. Do your warm-up and cool-down exercises too.

Excuse	Solution
I find it difficult to start.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose an activity that interests you. • Invite your family, friends or colleagues to get active with you. • Join an interest group or club and make new friends.
The weather is too hot.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get active early in the morning or evening. • Explore activities that can be done indoors, including using workout VCDs/DVDs*.

Put a stop to your excuses! You can make the difference. Make physical activity part of your life.

* The following workout VCDs/DVDs are available at the Health Information Centre of Health Promotion Board:

- Aarokkia Attam
- FaBulouS
- FunFITT
- Kebayarobics
- WorkFit

The FaBulouS DVD costs \$4 while the rest of the workout VCDs cost \$3 each. For more information, please call 6435 3954.

How Much Physical Activity Should You Be Doing?

For health benefits, you need to engage in both aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities each week.



Aerobic activities

Aerobic activity, also known as endurance activity, makes you breathe harder and your heart beat faster. It improves heart and lung fitness. Examples of aerobic activities are brisk walking, dancing, cycling, jogging, swimming and playing basketball.

 **Guide** [for healthy adults]

Engage in:

30 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity on
5 days a week

OR

20 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity
on 3 days a week

You can:

- Combine moderate and vigorous-intensity aerobic activity in a week for more variety.
- Do the aerobic activity in segments of at least 10 minutes. You don't have to do the 20 or 30 minutes at one go.



Try brisk walking. It can be fun and can be done anytime, anywhere.



Estimate your intensity

Intensity is how hard your body is working during aerobic activity. The table below is a simple guide to help you estimate your intensity.

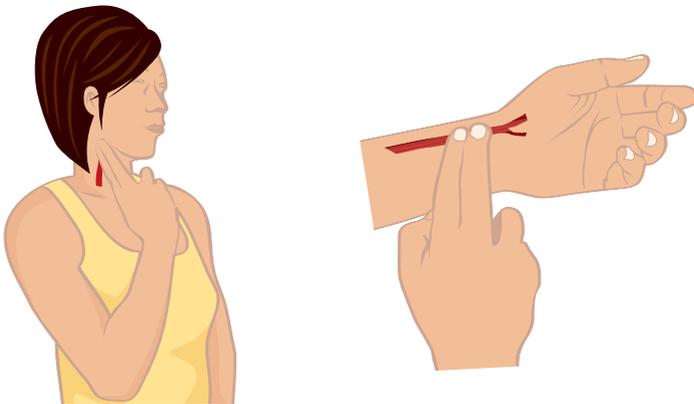
Intensity	Description	Examples
Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your heart rate increases.• You break a sweat.• You can still talk but not sing during the activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brisk walking (5 km/hr)• Leisure cycling (<16 km/hr)• Leisure swimming• Playing golf• Playing doubles tennis• Line-dancing
Vigorous	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You are breathing hard and fast.• Your heart rate increases significantly.• You will find it hard to hold a conversation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jogging or running• Swimming continuous laps• Playing singles tennis• Rollerblading at fast pace• Playing basketball or football• Skipping rope

The Exercise Heart Rate Chart can also be used to help you gauge how hard you are exercising. For moderate intensity, you should aim for 70%-80% of your Maximum Heart Rate*.

Follow these steps to determine your intensity:

Step 1 Immediately after you stopped your activity, take your pulse to measure your heart rate.

Your pulse can be felt on your wrists and neck. Count the number of beats for 15 seconds.

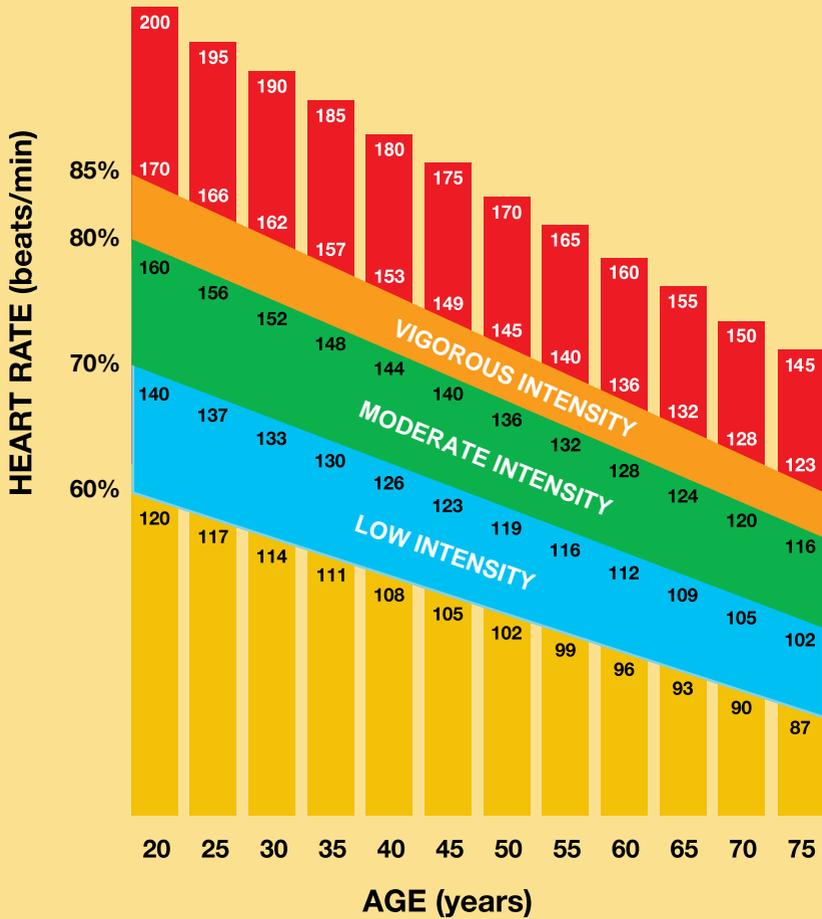


Step 2 Obtain your heart rate by multiplying the number of beats by 4.

Step 3 Using the Chart, read off from your age and calculated heart rate (in Step 2) to determine whether you are exercising in your desired intensity.

* Maximum Heart Rate = 220 – Your Age

Exercise Heart Rate Chart





Muscle-strengthening activities

Besides aerobic activity, you need to engage in activities to increase bone strength and muscular fitness. Muscle-strengthening activities reduce the risk of osteoporosis. Such activities should work all the major muscle groups of your body, that is, the legs, hips, back, chest, abdomen, shoulders and arms.

Examples include:

- Doing exercises that use your body weight for resistance (e.g. push ups, pull ups, sit ups and squats)
- Working with resistance bands
- Weight training

 **Guide** [for healthy adults]

Engage in muscle-strengthening activities that work all major muscle groups on 2 or more days a week.

Muscle-strengthening activities should be performed to the point at which it is difficult to do another repetition. A repetition is one complete movement of an activity, like lifting weights or doing sit-ups.

You can:

- Perform muscle-strengthening activities on the same or different days that you do aerobic activities.
- Start with one day a week and gradually increase the frequency.
- Start with less repetitions but work towards 8-12 repetitions as you get fitter.



You can use tin cans or bottled water as weights to perform your muscle-strengthening activities.



As you grow older, engage in balance activities to reduce your risk of falls. Try activities such as tai chi / qigong and exercises like walking on tiptoe and walking heel to toe.

Put Safety First

Physical activity is generally safe for everyone. If you have not been active and have a medical condition such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes or asthma, you should consult your doctor on the type and amount of physical activity suitable for you.



To minimise the risk of injury:

- Choose activities suitable for your fitness level and age.
- Start slow. Build up the intensity and the duration of the activity gradually. Give your body time to adjust to the increased physical activity.

Example

Aim to brisk walk three times a week if you have just started. Even if you only brisk walk for 10 minutes each time, congratulate yourself.

For the next week, you may want to try brisk walking 15 minutes each time or walk four times a week. During subsequent weeks, you may want to add other activities to keep the interest up.

Other safety tips

- Warm up by doing your activity at a slower speed or lower intensity. For example, walking briskly before your jogging session. This helps to prevent injuries.
- After your activity, cool down by performing gentle stretches. This helps to improve flexibility and prevent aches.
- Wear appropriate and comfortable clothes and shoes for your activity.
- Use safety gear. Examples include wearing a helmet when cycling and putting on elbow and knee guards when rollerblading.
- Exercise in safe areas, e.g. do not jog alone in dark paths or roads.
- Stop the activity immediately if you experience chest discomfort, pain, dizziness or other unusual symptoms.
- Drink water before, during and after your activity to prevent dehydration.
- Choose a cooler time of the day to get active. If you are exercising in hot weather, wear a cap and apply sunblock lotion.
- Do not exercise when you have a fever, a viral infection or are recovering from an illness.

Keep It Going

Make an active lifestyle your way of life. To keep it going, here's what you can do:

- Explore new activities with your family, friends or colleagues to keep the interest going.
- Pick up new sports or activities to inject variety.
- Set realistic short-term goals to help you stay focused and motivated.
- Do not feel miserable when something comes up that breaks your routine. Setbacks are temporary – just get going again as soon as you can.
- Reward yourself when you've achieved your goals.



Staying healthy for loved ones can be the strongest motivation to be physically active.

Know Your Fitness Level

See physical activity as an investment for your health. Over time, how do you assess the fitness benefits that come with regular physical activity?

You can measure your fitness level through fitness assessment tests such as the 2-km Walk Test and the 2.4-km Run Test.

The 2-km Walk Test

This test is suitable for people who have just started exercising as well as those who have been engaging in regular physical activity such as brisk walking.

The 2.4-km Run Test

The 2.4-km Run is more suitable for people who are fit and have been engaging in vigorous intensity activities such as jogging and running.

At selected parks in Singapore, there are walking trails with Do-It-Yourself Fitness Assessment signages containing step-by-step instructions on the 2-km Walk Test.

For more information, visit www.hpb.gov.sg/physicalactivity.



Let's Get Active!

- Remember, some physical activity is better than none. Be active every day and in as many ways as you can.
- **Aerobic activities**
 - Moderate – do 30 minutes of such activity on 5 days a week.
 - Vigorous – do 20 minutes of such activity on 3 days a week.
 - Can be performed in three segments of at least 10 minutes each.
 - Combine moderate and vigorous activities in a week for more variety.
- **Muscle-strengthening activities**
 - Do these on 2 or more days a week.



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