

## Physical Activity and Exercise

It is important for you to be physically active. In general, this means move more and sit less. It is just as important to exercise regularly. That means doing aerobic exercise, strength training and flexibility exercise to improve your fitness.

Benefits of physical activity and exercise:

- Lowers cancer risk or the risk of recurrence
- Improves overall health
- Promotes a healthy heart and lungs which lowers the risk for heart disease
- Helps prevent heart disease, diabetes and osteoporosis
- Helps with weight loss and maintenance which can reduce cancer risk
- Increases energy level, endurance, strength and flexibility
- Lessens the effects of stress, anxiety and fatigue and provides emotional well-being
- Helps maintain normal bowel function

### Physical Activity vs. Exercise

The term physical activity describes many forms of movement. Physical activity should not be confused with exercise. Exercise consists of activities that are planned, structured and repetitive. Exercise maintains or improves one or more of the components of physical fitness.

Three components of physical fitness that you should focus on are:

- Cardiovascular endurance – Done by doing aerobic exercise
- Muscular strength – Done by doing strengthening exercise
- Flexibility – Done by doing flexibility exercise

### Recommended Amounts and Types of Exercise

#### Aerobic Exercise

Aerobic exercise is any activity that keeps your heart rate and breathing raised for a period of time. Doing this strengthens and improves your heart and lung function. Aim for moderate or vigorous aerobic exercise most days of the week. When doing moderate exercise, you should be a little out of breath and feel your heart beating a little faster than usual. You should be able to talk, but not sing. During vigorous aerobic exercise, you should be breathing more rapidly and only able to speak a few words at a time. This is called the “Talk Test.”

Another way to determine the intensity of aerobic exercise is with a number scale from 0 to 10, with 0 being lowest intensity and 10 being highest intensity. You can use this scale to describe how hard you feel you are exercising. Moderate aerobic exercise puts you at a 4, 5 or 6 on that scale and vigorous puts you at a 7, 8 or 9. This is called the rate of perceived exertion (RPE) scale.

Based on your ability and goals, try to do the following:

- 150 minutes of moderate aerobic exercise each week

Or

- 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic exercise each week

Or

- Some combination of both vigorous and moderate aerobic exercise

You can change your exercise to meet your desired intensity. You can do this by changing your pace, increasing resistance or both. House cleaning or yard work can count as exercise. Use the Talk Test or the RPE scale to determine if your activity is creating a moderate or vigorous effort. If it is, then it counts! For example, when you are sweeping the floor, if you are breathing hard enough that you cannot sing but you can still talk, that can be considered moderate aerobic exercise. If you are sweeping at a leisurely pace without much effort, you are still being active, but not exercising.

If you have been recently diagnosed with cancer or are currently being treated for cancer, try to perform aerobic exercise for at least 30 minutes at a moderate intensity 3 times a week.

## **Strengthening Exercise**

Strengthening exercise, or strength training, is a type of exercise that provides resistance against a force. It can help:

- Build lean muscle.
- Improve muscle tone.
- Build bone density to help prevent osteoporosis.
- Strengthen muscles.

Do strength training at least 2 days per week. Choose a weight that is heavy enough that by the end of the second set of 12 repetitions, you cannot continue to do the exercise with good form, and your muscle feels very tired.

Do exercises that add resistance, such as:

- Using free weights or dumbbells to do a bicep curl
- Using weight machines to do leg presses
- Walking lunges which use your body weight as resistance
- Using resistance bands to do a shoulder press

## **Flexibility Exercise**

Flexibility exercise, also known as stretching, involves holding a position that stretches a muscle. It helps to keep full mobility in joints. It also helps avoid injury.

## **Tips for Success**

- Put exercise on your calendar to reserve time in your day.
- Find a partner with goals for fitness that are like yours. This will help you stay with your program and keep you company.
- Plan what exercises you want to do to meet your fitness goals.

- Warm up and cool down for 5 minutes. Remember to stretch after you cool down.
- You may need to increase activity and eat fewer calories to lose weight. A dietitian can help you with a personal weight loss plan.

## **Ways to be More Physically Active Throughout the Day**

- Use the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Park at the far end of the parking lot.
- Walk a few laps around the store before you begin to shop.
- Buy a new or used stationary bike and place it front of the television so you can pedal while you watch TV.
- Exercise during commercial breaks while you watch TV.
- Use a standing desk, if possible, throughout the day at work.
- Walk, jog or jump rope in place for 2 minutes every hour while at work.
- Carry groceries into the house 1 bag at a time.



Remember you need both exercise **and** physical activity.