

Human Vitality

- Foster Human Rights
- Preserve Culture & Diversity
- Protect Health & Wellbeing**

- Climate Change & Health
- **Disease Prevention**
- Education & Lifelong Learning
- Exercise & Fitness
- Extreme Poverty
- Global Hunger
- Hazard-Free Household
- Indoor Air Quality
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- Personal Care

Teach Your Kids

Step into Spring



Shop all step into spring



Exercise Daily to Prevent Disease

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The lack of physical activity causes more than 5.3 million premature deaths per year globally; 6% of the coronary heart disease, 7% of type 2 diabetes, 10% of breast cancer, and 10% of colon cancer is directly attributable to physical inactivity. The number of sedentary-related deaths will increase by more than 1.3 million deaths a year without a physical activity increase of 25%.^[i]

The importance of exercise for health is reinforced in the [Physical Activity Guide for Americans](#) which calls for 2.5 hours of moderate aerobic exercise per week. Unfortunately, only about 20% of adult Americans managed to do even this modest minimum.^[ii] At Hearts, we believe we can be better global citizens when we're healthy and disease free, and offer this guide to encourage you to consider how to increase your daily physical activity.



Quick Facts: Exercising for Long Life and Good Health

- **250,000 American deaths due to inactivity:** According to the Centers for Disease Control, more than 250,000 Americans die annually because of their sedentary lifestyle.^[iii]
- **16% lower risk of cancer with exercise:** This includes cancers of the liver, colon, stomach, and pancreas. Exercise stimulates the immune system; affects hormonal levels, particularly sex hormones and insulin which can prevent the spread and growth of cancers; and the number of fat cells for which cancer cells have affinity.^[iv]
- **30% diabetes risk reduction with exercising:**^[v] Exercise is the key for the prevention of type 1 and 2 diabetes. Exercise improves glucose uptake by increasing insulin sensitivity and lowering body adiposity. Physical activity can also improve glycemic control in type 2 diabetes.^[vi]
- **2x higher risk of coronary heart disease without exercise:**^[vii] Exercise prevents heart disease in direct and indirect ways: it pushes your heart to beat more efficiently, it helps reduce your blood pressure, it raises good cholesterol, it prevents formation of blood clots, reduces stress, controls the way your body uses insulin, and keeps you from gaining weight. In short, it can reduce your risk of heart disease by up to 55%.^[viii]
- **Exercisers are happier:** There is a very good, neurochemical reason why we feel de-stressed, happy, and exhilarated after exercise. Athletes call it the runners high. Scientists call it chemistry. Exercise reduces levels of stress hormones adrenaline and cortisol and stimulates the production of endorphins, the natural painkillers and mood elevators.^[ix]

Take Action! Improve Your Health through Exercise

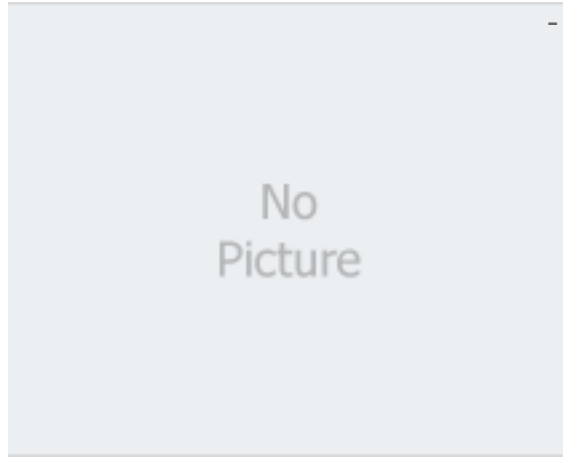
1. **Assess your fitness level:** Talk to your doctor to find out what kind of exercise is best for you. The Centers for Disease Control also has a guide to [How much physical activity do you need?](#) which gives advice based on your age and gender. ^[x] Seniors can find information pertaining to their age group at [Go4Life](#).
2. **Be realistic and chose activities you enjoy:** It's important to choose exercise that you enjoy otherwise you likely will not stick to it. Perhaps you like yoga, enjoy jogging, aspire to becoming a champion rock climber, or want to hit the elliptical machine. Whatever you choose, make sure you have fun so that you feel motivated to get it done at least five times per week. And if you like change, be sure to switch things up from day to day, too!
3. **Turn everyday activities into exercise:** If you have a dog, give him or her two brisk walks a day. If you like [biking](#), [bike](#) to work, or use your [bicycle to visit your friends](#) or neighbors. Play soccer with kids. Start an organic garden for [both aerobic and strength exercise](#).^[xi] Or turn your eco house cleaning into exercising by being energetic and vigorous about every task!^[xii]
4. **Political actions to get more American children exercising:** Support Michelle Obama's [Let's move!](#) Initiative. It addresses food and exercise in schools. With almost 20% of our children obese, their future might depend on getting the required 60 minutes of exercise a day.^[xiii]

Dig Deeper: the Importance of Exercise for Disease Prevention

- Read the [Surgeon General's](#) Vision of a Healthy and Fit Nation.
- Read the [Absolute Beginners' Guide to Exercise](#) to get even more stats and interesting ideas to make exercise a part of your everyday life.

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