

TOOLS AND RESOURCES FOR HEALTHY WEIGHT AND WELL-BEING

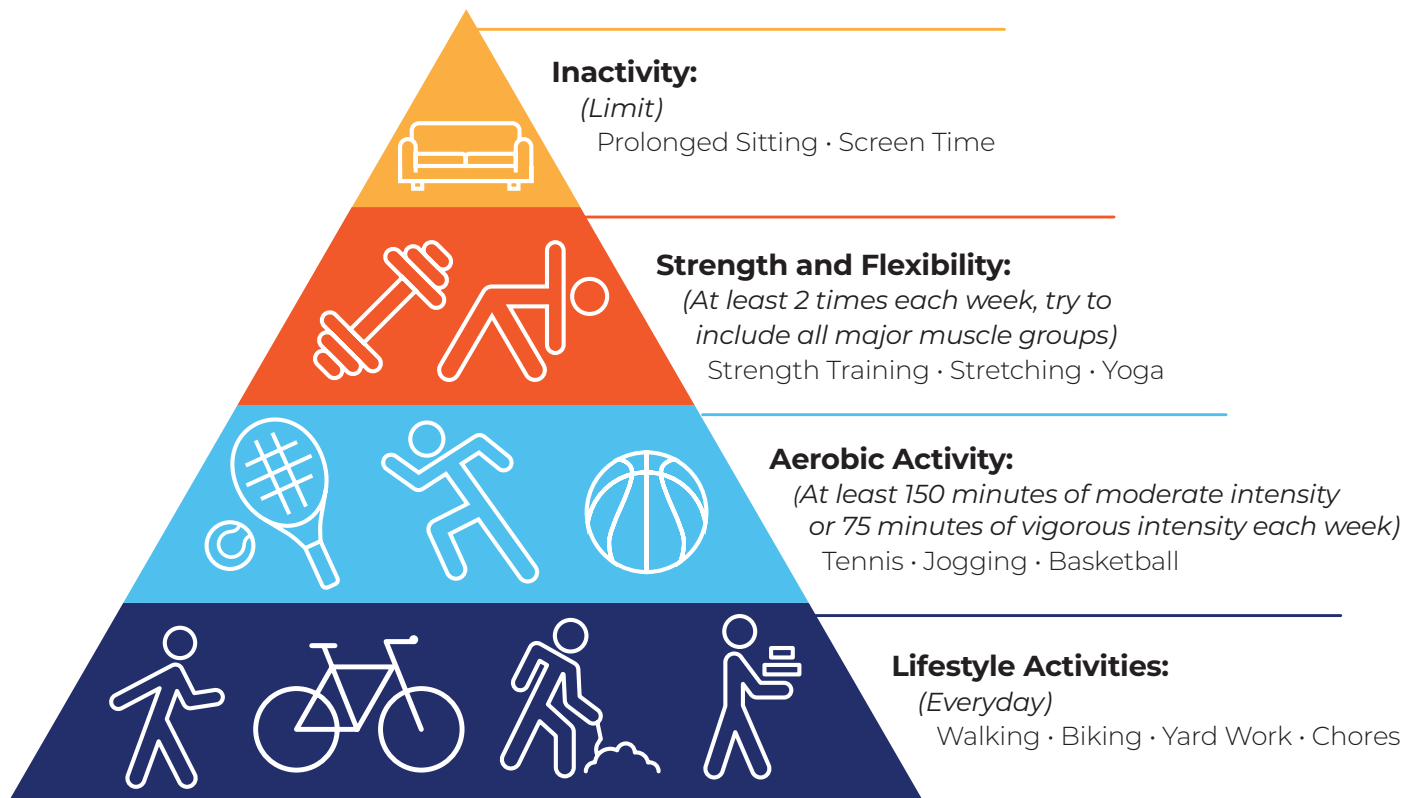


Physical Activity

Staying active is one of the most effective ways to support overall health and well-being. Physical activity doesn't have to mean intense workouts or gym memberships; it can be simple, enjoyable movements that fit naturally into daily life. This section provides practical tips, beginner-friendly ideas, and easy ways to add movement into a busy schedule. See Figure 3 for an overview.

FIGURE 3. Activity Pyramid¹⁷

ACTIVITY PYRAMID



17. Adapted from this source: University of Missouri

How Much Physical Activity Do You Need?

Fit in 150+

- Get at least 150 minutes per week (2 hours and 30 minutes) of moderate intensity aerobic activity or 75 minutes per week (1 hour and 15 minutes) of vigorous aerobic activity (or a combination of both)
- Spread out activity throughout the week, as possible.

Move More, Sit Less

- Get up and move throughout the day. Any activity is better than none. Even light-intensity activity can offset the serious health risks associated with being inactive.

Add Intensity

- Moderate to vigorous aerobic exercise is best. Your heart will beat faster, and you'll breathe harder than normal. As you get used to being more active, increase your time and/or intensity to get more benefits.

Add Muscle

- At least twice a week, include moderate-to-high-intensity muscle strengthening activity, such as resistance or weight training.

Feel Better

- Physical activity is one of the best ways to keep your brain busy and healthy. It relieves stress, improves mood, gives you energy, helps with sleep, and can lower your risk of chronic disease, including dementia and depression.



Figure 4 is a simple comparison chart to understand the difference between moderate-intensity and vigorous-intensity activities.¹⁸

FIGURE 4. Moderate vs. Vigorous Intensity Activity Examples

What is a moderate-intensity activity?

You can talk while you do it, but you can't sing.

MODERATE-INTENSITY AEROBIC ACTIVITIES	
Brisk Walking	Walk fast enough that talking is possible but singing feels difficult
Water Aerobics	Move arms and legs in shallow water, follow a class, or do simple cardio moves
Dancing (ballroom or social)	Salsa, line dancing, or following a dance fitness video at a comfortable pace
Gardening	Rake, pull weeds, plant, push a lawn mower
Tennis (singles)	Play with a partner, rally, or practice volleys
Biking <10 mph	Leisurely ride a bike, ride with kids, or cycle to run small errands

What is a vigorous-intensity activity?

You can only say a few words without stopping to catch your breath

VIGOROUS-INTENSITY AEROBIC ACTIVITIES	
Running	Any pace that makes conversation challenging
Swimming Laps	Swim continuously back and forth in a pool at a steady, challenging pace
Vigorous Aerobic Dancing	Zumba, kickboxing, or fast-paced group workouts
Heavy Yardwork	Strenuous outdoor work like digging, shoveling, hauling soil, or pushing a heavy wheelbarrow
Tennis (singles)	Fast-paced play with more running and quick movements
Cycling	Bike uphill or ride faster than 10 mph

18. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2018). Physical activity guidelines for Americans (2nd ed.). https://odphp.health.gov/sites/default/files/2019-09/Physical_Activity_Guidelines_2nd_edition.pdf