



Written by Steven Ramos, M.D.

July 2017

Exercise and Fitness: What you need to know.

“Doc, what kind of exercise is the best for weight loss?”

“Doc, how much should I be exercising?”

“Doc, I’m not overweight and I don’t have any medical problems. Do I really need to exercise?”

These are all common questions I get from patients, and the answers to these questions are much more simple than expected. Now, let me be clear, different people need different forms of exercise. There is no one exercise or set of exercises that are “best”. What I can say is that exercise can help anyone and everyone. The benefits of an active lifestyle versus a sedentary lifestyle have been clearly demonstrated in large studies from countries around the world, looking at men and women of all ages and with a variety of medical conditions. The end result is simple, people who exercise live longer, healthier lives.



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How will exercise help you? Well, it has been documented time and time again through large studies from around the world that physical activity results in longer, healthier lives. Want to lose weight? Exercise. Want to lower your blood pressure and/or cholesterol without medications? Exercise. Want to get your diabetes under control? Exercise. Want to live a longer and healthier life? Exercise.

So, you want to start an exercise program. You have friends that do cross fit, an uncle that goes to Gold’s Gym, your father bikes 10 miles a day, and a coworker has been trying to get you to do hot yoga for weeks. Which is right for you? First, start at your doctor’s office. Not only is your doctor going to be a great source of encouragement for your workout program, but he or she will want to perform a physical exam and ask you a few questions before you start working out. The benefits are crystal clear, people who live an active lifestyle have longer, healthier lives than those who live a sedentary lifestyle. But before you sign up for a gym or order home exercise equipment, talk to your doctor to make sure you are healthy enough to start an exercise program. Your doctor will likely ask you questions about your medical conditions, any injuries you may have had in the past, any exercise programs you have done in the past, and any medications you are on. If your doc gives you the all clear, the next important step is figuring out HOW MUCH exercise you need, rather than what type.

The American Heart Association, The American Diabetes Association, and The American College of Sports Medicine recommends at least 150 minutes (2 and ½ hours) of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity per week or 75 minutes of vigorous physical activity per week. That’s as little as walking 30 minutes a day, five days a week. That’s it! There have been numerous studies done around the world that have identified the benefits of physical activity and exercise, with reductions in cardiovascular disease, diabetes, mortality and even cancer. Many studies show marked reduction in all-cause mortality with as little as 75 minutes of vigorous physical activity per week (the weekend warriors). With exercise, more is often better - to a certain point. When studied, there is very little benefit for greater than 100 minutes per day of moderate intensity exercise when talking about cardiovascular health.





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Now, which will be better for you? Cardiovascular/aerobic exercise? Weight lifting? Yoga? Running? Rowing? Swimming? This is where your doctor can help you identify which exercise is right for you. For instance, diabetic patients with eye complications should avoid weight lifting and often we recommend they avoid repetitive contact activities (jogging, cycling) due to the risk of underlying neuropathies. If you have bad knees or shoulders, perhaps high impact weight lifting is not right for you. Largely, you should pick an exercise program that will allow you to adhere to the goal requirements of 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity.

If you like the social interaction or need motivation from a group, perhaps a large gym or structured classes are best for you. If you are on a budget and with a busy work schedule, perhaps home fitness and equipment is your best option. It's really about adherence and finding an exercise program you will enjoy and look forward to, making those weekly minutes pass a little easier. I recommend resistance training for most of my patients, at least 2-3 times a week for 15-20 minutes along with their aerobic exercise.

Resistance training along with aerobic/cardiovascular activity helps promote lean muscle mass and bone density. Along with preventing cardiovascular disease, adding lean muscle mass can help prevent and/or reverse insulin resistance which is a common cause of diabetes and promote overall metabolic health (weight loss). For resistance training, focus on large muscle groups (leg muscles, back muscles, core muscles) working 10-12 repetitions per set with about 1 minute of rest between sets.

Whichever exercise program you decide on, it is important to start slow and gradually increase the intensity of your exercise as you go. There is no reason to try and run a full marathon on your first day. Listen to your body, and increase your intensity as your body allows. If you start to develop pain, discomfort and fatigue and breathlessness out of proportion for your activity, you should halt your exercise program and consult your primary care doctor to ensure your activity is safe.

### Benefits of regular physical activity

- Reduces the risk of dying prematurely
- Reduces the risk of dying from heart disease
- Reduces the risk of stroke
- Reduces the risk of developing high blood pressure
- Helps reduce blood pressure in people who already have high blood pressure
- Reduces the risk of developing colon cancer
- Reduces the feelings of depression and anxiety
- Helps control weight
- Helps build and maintain healthy bones, muscles, and joints
- Helps older adults become stronger and better able to move about without falling
- Promotes psychological wellbeing

Reference: <https://www.uptodate.com/Wolters Kluwer>

### Examples of moderate physical activity

- Washing and waxing a car for 45-60 minutes
- Washing windows or floors for 45-60 minutes
- Playing volleyball for 45 minutes
- Playing touch football for 30-45 minutes
- Gardening for 30-45 minutes
- Wheeling self in wheelchair for 30-40 minutes
- Walking 1 3/4 miles in 35 minutes (20 min/mile)
- Basketball (shooting baskets) for 30 minutes
- Bicycling 5 miles in 30 minutes
- Dancing fast (social) for 30 minutes
- Pushing a stroller 1.5 miles in 30 minutes
- Raking leaves for 30 minutes
- Walking 2 miles in 30 minutes (15 min/mile)
- Water aerobics for 30 minutes
- Swimming laps for 20 minutes
- Wheelchair basketball for 20 minutes
- Basketball (playing a game) for 15-20 minutes
- Bicycling 4 miles in 15 minutes
- Jumping rope for 15 minutes
- Running 1.5 miles in 15 min (10 min/mile)
- Stair walking for 15 minutes

Less Vigorous  
More time

More Vigorous  
Less time



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## Healthy Corner Recipe

From <http://allrecipes.com/recipe/235557/strawberry-kiwi-smoothie/>

### Ingredients:

- 2 cups fresh ripe strawberries, stems removed
- 1 1/2 cups vanilla yogurt
- 1 cup orange juice
- 2 bananas
- 2 kiwis, peeled
- 1/4 cup honey



### Directions:

**Prep: 10 m, Ready In 10 m**

1. Blend strawberries, yogurt, orange juice, bananas, kiwis, and honey together in a blender until smooth.

### Footnotes:

### Cook's Notes:

For a thicker smoothie, replace vanilla yogurt with Vanilla Greet Yogurt. In addition to being thicker, the Greek yogurt adds more protein to the smoothie. If desired, add ice to thicken the mixture.

### QPIC Corner

In Network Imaging Center (Mammograms, CT, MRI's, and other imaging)



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