

# ready. set. go.

## Helping you stay healthy through physical activity. From head to toe.

We all know part of being a healthy person is being physically active. But have you ever stopped to think about *why*? Read on to learn about the many benefits physical activity can offer you for a lifetime of better health.

### Find your balance.

When it comes to controlling your weight, diet and exercise both play a critical role. What's more, studies show physical activity can help you maintain your weight over time. The amount of physical activity someone needs varies from person to person. So it's important to remember everyone is different, and you may need to be more active than others to achieve or maintain a healthy weight.

Most people who want to lose weight incorporate longer or more intense amounts of physical activity into their workout while reducing the amount of calories they eat or drink throughout the day. That's because getting to and staying at a healthy weight requires both regular physical activity and a healthy eating plan.

### Take your health to heart.

Heart disease and stroke are the two leading causes of death in the United States. But following the recommended guidelines and getting at least 150 minutes a week (2 hours and 30 minutes) of moderate-intensity aerobic activity can put you at a significantly lower risk for these diseases. In addition, regular physical activity can lower your blood pressure and improve your cholesterol levels. So show your heart some love and exercise.

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### **Exercise for the health of it.**

Regular physical activity can reduce your risk of developing type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome. Metabolic syndrome is a condition in which you have some combination of too much fat around the waist, high blood pressure, low HDL cholesterol, high triglycerides or high blood sugar. Research shows that lower rates of these conditions occur when people engage in 120–150 minutes (2 hours to 2 hours and 30 minutes) a week of at least moderate-intensity aerobic activity. And the more physical activity you do, the lower your risk will be.

### **Already have type 2 diabetes?**

Regular physical activity can help control your blood glucose levels, weight and blood pressure. It can raise your “good” cholesterol and lower your “bad” cholesterol. And, it can help prevent heart and blood flow problems by reducing your risk of heart disease and nerve damage, which are often problems for people with diabetes.

### **Tell cancer to take a walk.**

Being physically active lowers your risk for colon and breast cancer. Studies show physically active people have a lower risk of colon cancer than those who don't exercise. Likewise, active women have a lower risk of breast cancer than those who are sedentary.

And, research shows those who survive cancer enjoy a better quality of life when they include physical activity in their daily routine. So get active. And kick cancer.

### **Be good to your bones.**

As you age, it's important to protect your bones, joints and muscles. Not only do they support your body and help you move, but keeping bones, joints and muscles healthy can help ensure you're able to actively keep up with your daily activities. Research shows that doing aerobic, muscle- and bone-strengthening physical activity of at least a moderately-intense level can increase or maintain your muscle mass and strength while slowing the loss of bone density that comes with age. Start slow and gradually increase the amount of weight you lift and the number of repetitions you do to reap those health benefits.

### **Move a muscle. Change a thought.**

Regular physical activity can help keep your thinking, learning and judgment skills sharp as you age. It can also reduce your risk of depression, and may even help you sleep better. Some scientific evidence has also shown that lower levels of physical activity can be beneficial as well. So whether you hit the gym, take a salsa class or do a little gardening, any physical activity is better than none.



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/health/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/health/index.html)

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