



EXERCISE GUIDELINES

Guidelines for adults over age 65 (or adults 50-64 with chronic conditions, such as arthritis)

Basic recommendations from ACSM and AHA:

Do moderately intense aerobic exercise 30 minutes a day, five days a week

Or

Do vigorously intense aerobic exercise 20 minutes a day, 3 days a week

And

Do eight to 10 strength-training exercises, 10-15 repetitions of each exercise twice to three times per week

And

If you are at risk of falling, perform balance exercises

And

Have a physical activity plan.

Both aerobic and muscle-strengthening activity is critical for healthy aging. **Moderate-intensity aerobic exercise** means working hard at about a level-six intensity on a scale of 10. You should still be able to carry on a conversation during exercise.

Older adults or adults with chronic conditions should develop an **activity plan** with a health professional to manage risks and take therapeutic needs into account. This will maximize the benefits of physical activity and ensure your safety.

Key points to the guidelines for older adults

Although the guidelines for older adults and adults with chronic conditions are similar to those for younger adults, there are a few key differences and points to consider.

- **Start, and get help if you need it.** The general recommendation is that older adults should meet or exceed 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days of the week; however, it is also recognized that goals below this threshold may be necessary for older adults who have physical impairments or functional limitations.
- **Functional health** is an important benefit of physical activity for older adults. Physical activity contributes to the ease of doing everyday activities, such as gardening, walking or cleaning the house.



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- **Strength training** is extremely important. Strength training is important for all adults, but especially so for older adults, as it prevents loss of muscle mass and bone, and is beneficial for functional health.
- **If you can exceed the minimum recommendations**, do it! The minimum recommendations are just that: the *minimum* needed to maintain health and see fitness benefits. If you can exceed the minimum, you can improve your personal fitness, improve management of an existing disease or condition, and reduce your risk for health conditions and mortality.
- **Flexibility** is also important. Each day you perform aerobic or strength-training activities, take an extra 10 minutes to stretch the major muscle and tendon groups, with 10-30 seconds for each stretch. Repeat each stretch three to four times. Flexibility training will promote the ease of performing everyday activities.

Starting an exercise program

Starting an exercise program can sound like a daunting task, but just remember that your main goal is to meet the basic physical activity recommendations: 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity at least five days per week, or vigorous-intensity activity at least three days per week, and strength training two to three times per week.

Choose activities that appeal to you and will make exercise fun. **Walking** is a great, easy way to do moderate-intensity physical activity.

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