

# Women's Health Update



Fall 2010

Bureau of Health Promotion and Risk Reduction, Office of Healthy Ohio, Ohio Department of Health



Update Focus: Women and Physical Activity



## Letter from Debra Seltzer

What will it take to move those of us who are not as physically active as we should be? I sure wish I knew. One powerful motivator for me is my teenage daughter. She is a lot more active than I am, and I am very proud of her for that, but she could do more. My increased activity would not only set a positive example, but would also improve my health and increase my likelihood of being an active part of her life for many years. Of course, increased physical activity is something I can and should do for my own sake, not just for others – but being there for our family members is often a strong motivator for women.

This newsletter provides a wealth of information, resources and specific steps we can take for ourselves and share with our friends, family, coworkers and community. Please use it and pass it along to others who will benefit from the information! We are sending this issue via email to those who requested it that way and that format will make it easy to send on to others. If you receive a hard copy and would like to also receive the newsletter as a pdf attachment, contact Jenelle Adkins at [jenelle.adkins@odh.ohio.gov](mailto:jenelle.adkins@odh.ohio.gov) to make that request.

*Debra Seltzer - Program Administrator*



# Physical Activity and Health:

*A Report of the Surgeon General's*

## KEY MESSAGES FOR WOMEN

- Physical activity need not be strenuous to achieve health benefits.
- Women of all ages benefit from a moderate amount of physical activity, preferably daily. The same moderate amount of activity can be obtained in longer sessions of moderately intense activities (such as 30 minutes of brisk walking) or in shorter sessions of more strenuous activities (such as 15-20 minutes of jogging).
- Additional health benefits can be gained through greater amounts of physical activity. Women who can maintain a regular routine of physical activity, that is of longer duration or of greater intensity are likely to derive greater benefit. However, excessive amounts of physical activity should be avoided, because the risk of injury increases with greater amounts of activity, as does the risk of menstrual abnormalities and bone weakening.
- Previously inactive women who begin physical activity programs should start with short intervals (5-10 minutes) of physical activity and gradually build up to the desired level of activity.
- Women with chronic health problems, such as heart disease, diabetes, or obesity, or who are at high risk for these conditions should first consult a physician before beginning a new program of physical activity.
- Women over age 50 who plan to begin a new program of vigorous physical activity should first consult a physician to be sure they do not have heart disease or other health problems.
- Moderate amounts of physical activity allow women to vary activities to meet individual needs, preferences, and life circumstances.

## FACTS

- More than 60 percent of U.S. women do not engage in the recommended amount of physical activity.
- More than 25 percent of U.S. women are not active at all.
- Physical inactivity is more common among women than men.
- Social support from family and friends has been consistently and positively related to regular physical activity.

Physical activity is safe for almost everyone and the health benefits of physical activity far outweigh the risks.



# Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans

## At-A-Glance: A Fact Sheet for Professionals

The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans At-A-Glance: A Fact Sheet for Professionals is designed for busy professionals as a quick desk-side reference to the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

These Guidelines are needed because of the importance of physical activity to the health of Americans, whose current inactivity puts them at unnecessary risk. The latest information shows that inactivity among American children, adolescents, and adults remains relatively high, and little progress has been made in increasing levels of physical activity among Americans.

### • Key Guidelines •

Substantial health benefits are gained by doing physical activity according to the Guidelines presented below

#### **ADULTS** (AGED 18–64)

- Adults should do 2 hours and 30 minutes a week of moderate-intensity, or 1 hour and 15 minutes (75 minutes) a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity, or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity. Aerobic activity should be performed in episodes of at least 10 minutes, preferably spread throughout the week.
- Additional health benefits are provided by increasing to 5 hours (300 minutes) a week of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity, or 2 hours and 30 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity physical activity, or an equivalent combination of both.
- Adults should also do muscle-strengthening activities that involve all major muscle groups performed on 2 or more days per week.

#### **Older Adults** (AGED 65+)

- Older adults should follow the adult guidelines. If this is not possible due to limiting chronic conditions, older adults should be as physically active as their abilities allow. They should avoid inactivity. Older adults should do exercises that maintain or improve balance if they are at risk of falling.

*For all individuals, some activity is better than none. Physical activity is safe for almost everyone and the health benefits of physical activity far outweigh the risks. People without diagnosed chronic conditions (such as diabetes, heart disease, or osteoarthritis) who do not have symptoms (e.g., chest pain or pressure, dizziness, or joint pain) do not need to consult with a health care provider about physical activity.*

#### **PREGNANT & POSTPARTUM WOMEN**

Healthy women who are not already doing vigorous-intensity physical activity, should get at least 2 hours and 30 minutes (150 minutes) of moderate-intensity aerobic activity a week throughout their pregnancy. Preferably, this activity should be spread throughout the week. Women who regularly engage in vigorous-intensity aerobic activity or high amounts of activity can continue their activity provided that their condition remains unchanged and they talk to their health care provider about their activity level throughout their pregnancy.

## HEALTH BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

### *A Review of the Strength of the Scientific Evidence*

#### ADULTS AND OLDER ADULTS

##### Strong Evidence

- Lower risk of:
- Early death
- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Type 2 diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Adverse blood lipid profile
- Metabolic syndrome
- Colon and breast cancers
- Prevention of weight gain
- Weight loss when combined with diet
- Improved cardio respiratory and muscular fitness
- Prevention of falls
- Reduced depression
- Better cognitive function (older adults)

##### Moderate to Strong Evidence

- Better functional health (older adults)
- Reduced abdominal obesity

##### Moderate Evidence

- Weight maintenance after weight loss
- Lower risk of hip fracture
- Increased bone density
- Improved sleep quality
- Lower risk of lung and endometrial cancers

## Physical Aerobic Activities .....



Aerobic activity involves moving the large muscles in your arms, legs, and hips over and over again. During aerobic activity, you breathe faster and more deeply, and your heart beats faster. If your breathing and heart rate increase to a moderate degree, your activity is considered moderate intensity. An example would be walking on a level surface at a brisk pace (about 3 to 4 miles per hour). If your breathing increases so much that it is difficult to carry on a conversation, your activity is considered vigorous intensity. An example would be jogging.

Do at least 10 minutes of aerobic activity at a time. It is best to spread it throughout the week. This physical activity should be in addition to your routine activities of daily living, such as cooking or walking a short distance such as from the parking lot to your office.

If you have not been physically active for a long time, you need to start slowly and then work your way up as you become more fit. For example, if you do not feel up to walking for 30 minutes, try walking for 10 minutes. Then increase your walking time by 5 minutes each week until you reach 30 minutes.

## Moderate and Vigorous Physical activities to Consider

	Moderate Activities	Vigorous Activities
Leisure Activities	Walking at a brisk pace, ballroom dancing, leisurely bicycling, roller skating, canoeing	Jogging, running, bicycling fast or uphill, jumping rope, swimming continuous laps
Sports	Golfing, softball, badminton, downhill skiing, Frisbee playing	Singles tennis, beach volleyball on sand, basketball game, soccer, cross-country skiing
Home Activities	Pushing a lawn mower, gardening, raking leaves, shoveling light snow, moderate housework, hand washing/waxing a car, actively playing with children, riding a stationary bike	Pushing a hand mower, heavy or rapid shoveling (more than 10 pounds per minute), carrying items weighing 25 pounds or more up a flight of stairs
Occupational Activities	Maid service, waiting tables, feeding or grooming farm animals, manually milking cows, picking fruits or vegetables, walking while carrying a mailbag	Teaching an aerobic dance class, heavy farm work

## Muscle-Strengthening Activities

Another type of physical activity that you should do on a regular basis is strength training. Muscle-strengthening activities increase the strength and endurance of your muscles. Examples of these activities include working out with weight machines and free weights.

You do not need to invest in a gym membership or buy expensive home gym equipment to do muscle-strengthening activities. Hand, wrist, and ankle weights are less costly options. Also, homemade weights, such as plastic soft drink bottles filled with sand or water, may work just as well. You can also use your own body weight, doing activities such as push-ups, pull-ups, and sit-ups. You could also buy a resistance band at a sporting-goods store. It looks like a giant rubber band, and stretching it helps build muscle.

You should try to do muscle-strengthening activities on two or more days each week. Allow one day in between sessions to avoid excess strain on your muscles and joints. During each session, repeat each activity 8-12 times.



**Remember  
to do strength  
training on a  
regular basis!**

# Start Strength Training for Good Health

*Excerpted from [HealthyWomen.org](http://HealthyWomen.org)*



Your healthy future depends upon keeping your muscles strong. Losing strength may result in serious health problems including fractures, imbalance, loss of mobility and inactivity which can lead to diabetes, heart disease and obesity. Yet those risks can be reversed or even prevented, with quick and simple strength training exercises.

The health payoffs are big. Just a few months of strength (also called resistance) training—at home, in a gym or fitness center—can lower your cholesterol, reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease, help you avoid osteoporosis, decrease arthritic symptoms and build muscle so you remain active and independent for years to come.

## LOSING MUSCLE WITH AGE

Most women know that aging can weaken our bones. If left untreated, this condition (called osteopenia) can lead to osteoporosis. A related process—called sarcopenia—happens when our muscles and lean body mass begin to decline.

“The loss of muscle mass starts in your early 30s,” says Michael J. Hewitt, Ph.D., research director for exercise science at Canyon Ranch Health Resort in Tucson. “By the time a woman is in her mid-40s, she may have lost six to seven

percent of her muscle mass.” Strength or resistance training—whether performed with handheld weights, exercise bands, or on more sophisticated machines—helps fight that muscle loss.

If that muscle isn’t retained or rebuilt, you lose strength. You also lose metabolic rate, which causes you to gain weight. Eventually, as muscle mass declines further with each decade, everyday activities—such as rising from a chair, putting away the dishes, or getting out of the bathtub—may become too difficult to manage.

## BENEFITS TO HEART

Strength training also helps your heart health, says Kevin R. Vincent, M.D., Ph.D., of the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at The University of Virginia in Charlottesville. Vincent co-authored research showing that resistance exercise aided cardiovascular function by lowering levels of homocysteine, an amino acid that can cause harmful clots, increasing anti-oxidant defenses, and decreasing blood pressure.

Exercising with resistance keeps your blood pressure response lower when you hurry to catch a bus, climb stairs, or lift a box. That’s protective, so you run a smaller risk of having a heart attack or a stroke.

## GETTING STARTED

Even if you've never lifted a weight before, you can begin an easy strength training program. Indeed, women who are new to resistance exercise gain the most health benefits from such training.

"It's never too late to start," Vincent says. "Start with light weights and progress slowly." He advises spending two to three months using light weights and gradually getting used to the exercises. Check with your doctor beforehand, especially if you have a chronic medical condition or joint problems.

You don't have to join a gym to get stronger. Resistance exercises are easy to do at home with inexpensive handheld weights, available at discount stores and sporting-goods suppliers. You can also build strength effectively with lightweight elastic resistance bands.

### TEN MINUTES, TWICE A WEEK

Here are three exercises — wall squat, chest press and single arm row — that take only about 10 minutes, twice a week. In that brief time, the three exercises work about 85 percent of the

body's muscle mass. They can also stimulate bone growth, helping to curb osteopenia at the same time they're fighting sarcopenia. Go to: <http://www.healthywomen.org/content/article/start-strength-training-good-health> for the complete description of these exercises.

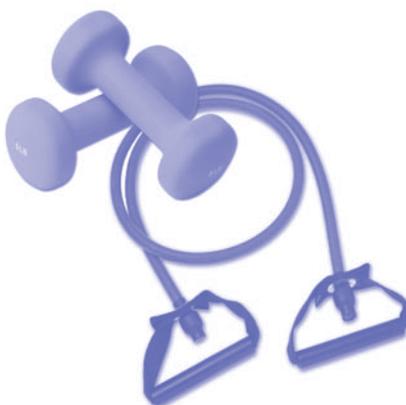
### RULES OF THE GAME

When just starting out, aim to do one set of eight to 12 repetitions (called reps) of each exercise. With strength training, you work to a level of fatigue at the end of each set. If you can only do six reps, you may need a lighter weight. If you easily reach 13 reps, it is time to use a heavier weight.

As you become accustomed to the exercises, build to doing two sets of each exercise, twice a week. With proficiency, you'll still be able to complete a session in about 10 minutes. You may even add a third session during the week, but allow at least a day's rest between them.

For strength training to be effective, you need to do it regularly, with no more than three days between sessions or the benefits begin to wear off. When traveling, do the exercises in a hotel room, using a laptop computer or briefcase. If they are too light, add the room's phone directory or Bible for additional weight.

**It's never  
too late  
to start,  
and you  
do not  
have to  
join a gym!**



## Learn More! Visit...

<http://www.healthywomen.org/content/article/start-strength-training-good-health>



# Fibromyalgia



## Exercise, Weight Control and Fibromyalgia...

*Study finds link between excess weight and the pain disorder, especially among inactive women.*

By Kathleen Doheny - **Health Day** Reporter  
THURSDAY, April 29, 2010 (Health Day News)

**Women who are overweight or obese appear to have an increased risk of developing the chronic pain syndrome known as fibromyalgia, a new study suggests. If they are also sedentary, the risk is even greater, said lead researcher Paul Mork, of Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim, Norway. The study is published in the May issue of *Arthritis Care & Research*.**

Fibromyalgia is marked by widespread pain lasting more than three months. The pain strikes so-called "tender points" in the neck, shoulders, back, hips, arms and legs. The condition is also marked by fatigue without apparent cause, mood disturbances, sleep problems and headaches. More women than men have it, and experts don't thoroughly understand its cause. The condition may be due to dysfunction in the nervous system and other problems, and it is thought to be affected by genetic susceptibility.

In the new study, Mork and his colleagues turned to a data base of nearly 16,000 women in Norway who had responded to health surveys. Among the participants were 380 who developed fibromyalgia during the 11-year follow-up. Mork's team compared the data from patients with the healthy respondents, including body-mass index (BMI) and exercise habits.

Exercise and a healthy body weight were found to be protective. "Women who reported exercising four times per week [or more] had a 29 percent lower risk of fibromyalgia compared with inactive women," Mork said in a news release about the study. Those who exercised two to three times a week were about 11 percent less likely to get fibromyalgia.

"According to previous findings reported in the literature, we expected that regular leisure-time physical exercise would have a protective effect on future development of fibromyalgia [FM]," Mork said. "However, we only found a weak association between development of FM and exercise. However, it should be noted that we were not able to differ between different types of

exercise, and it might be possible that some exercise types are more beneficial than others in protecting against future development of FM," he added.

Being overweight -- with a BMI of 25 or higher -- was a strong independent risk factor, with the heavier women having a 60 percent to 70 percent higher risk of developing the condition compared to the healthy weight women. The overweight women

who exercised an hour or more a week, however, were less likely to get the condition than were overweight women who were inactive. Mork's advice: Regular exercise, which can help maintain weight, may serve as a "buffer" against the symptoms that eventually lead to fibromyalgia.

The results are entirely plausible, said Dr. Patrick Wood, senior medical adviser for the National Fibromyalgia Association, who cares for many fibromyalgia patients. But with the condition, there are often the chicken-egg

questions, he added, such as whether the pain leads to the inactivity or weight gain or vice versa. "It's difficult with any level of assurance to know what's driving what," Wood said. There could be underlying factors driving both excess weight and pain sensitivity, he noted. The inflammation that

**Women who reported exercising four times per week had a 29% lower risk of fibromyalgia compared with inactive women.**

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*Fibromyalgia continued from page 9*

is associated with obesity may heighten pain sensitivity, Wood added.

More study is needed, Wood said. Until more is known, however, he would advise people who want to avoid the condition to maintain a healthy weight and exercise regularly. That's especially wise for those with a family history of fibromyalgia, he stressed, because he has found that it does tend to run in families. For those already diagnosed with the condition, Wood said, "some data show

if you exercise and keep your weight down you may have less pain."

## Learn More! about fibromyalgia

visit the **National Fibromyalgia Association** at  
<http://www.fmaware.org>

(SOURCES: Patrick Wood, M.D., senior medical advisor, National Fibromyalgia Association, and family medicine physician, Renton, Wash.; Paul Mork, D.Phil., Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway; May 2010, *Arthritis Care & Research*)

# WomanActivityTracker

★ Woman Challenge – May 8 – July 2, 2011 ★

womenshealth.gov

## Sign On for the "Woman Challenge"!

### What is the Woman Challenge?

In May, thousands of women across the country embark on an eight-week physical activity challenge for better health. They will be part of the Woman Challenge, a program of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office on Women's Health (OWH). The Woman Challenge is a part of the OWH year-long Woman Activity Tracker program and its launch will kick off the 12th annual National Women's Health Week (May 8-14, 2011).

The Woman Challenge encourages women to get at least 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity each week. You can register online in March 2011 for the Woman Challenge. In the meantime, you can register online for the Woman Activity Tracker at: <http://Womenshealth.gov/Woman/register>



# Resources

## PUBLICATIONS

### 1. **2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans**

These guidelines summarize the latest knowledge about physical activity and health. This will help you learn about the health benefits of physical activity, how to reduce the risk of activity-related injury, and how you can participate in physical activity in a way that meets the guidelines.

<http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/Default.aspx>

### 2. **Weight-Training and Weight-Lifting Safety** ©AAFP

This fact sheet discusses the basics of beginning a weight training fitness routine and outlines injury prevention steps. Go to <http://www.familydoctor.org>; SEARCH "weight training and weight-lifting safety"

## INTERNET

### 3. **Physical Activity Evaluation Handbook**

This evaluation handbook provides information about physical activity indicators, as well as practical case studies and other evaluation resources.

<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpal/physical/handbook/pdf/handbook.pdf>

### 4. **Walkable Score**

When you type in your address, you get your Walk Score. This will tell how walkable your neighborhood is based on what is nearby: grocery stores, restaurants, etc.

<http://www.walkscore.com>.

### 5. **The U.S. National Physical Activity Plan**

Is a comprehensive set of policies, programs, and initiatives that aim to increase physical activity in all segments of the American population. The Plan is the product of a private-public sector collaboration and will empower hundreds of organizations to work together to change their communities and increase physically activity.

<http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/index.html>



# ORGANIZATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS

## **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion**

Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity, MS-K-46  
4770 Buford Highway, NE  
Atlanta, Georgia 30341-3724  
1-888-CDC-4NRG or 1-888-232-4674 (Toll Free)  
Website: <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao>

### **Mission:**

To lead strategic public health efforts to prevent and control obesity disease and other health conditions through regular physical activity and good nutrition.

### **Goals:**

- Increase health-related physical activity through population-based approaches.
- Improve those aspects of dietary quality most related to the population burden of chronic disease and unhealthy child development.
- Decrease prevalence of obesity through preventing excess weight gain and maintenance of healthy weight loss.

### **Supporting State Programs:**

The Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity Program (NPAO) is a cooperative agreement between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity (DNPAO) and 23 state health departments. The program goal is to prevent and control obesity and other chronic diseases through healthful eating and physical activity. The state program will develop strategies to leverage resources and coordinate statewide efforts with multiple partners to address all of the following DNPAO principal target areas:

1. Increase physical activity.
2. Increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables.
3. Decrease the consumption of sugar sweetened beverages.
4. Increase breastfeeding initiation, duration and exclusivity.
5. Reduce the consumption of high energy dense foods.
6. Decrease television viewing.

## **The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports**

1101 Wooten Pkwy  
Ste 560 Tower Building  
Rockville, MD 20852  
Phone: 240-276-9567  
Fax: 240-276-9860

Website: [www.fitness.gov](http://www.fitness.gov)

### **About the Council**

The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports is an advisory committee of volunteer citizens who advise the President through the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) about physical activity, fitness and sports in America. Through its programs and partnerships with the public, private and non-profit sectors, the Council serves as a catalyst to promote health, physical activity, fitness and enjoyment for people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities through participation in physical activity and sports. The twenty Council members are appointed and serve at the pleasure of the President.



For more information  
visit us online!

### **WOMEN'S HEALTH PROGRAM**

[http://www.odh.ohio.gov/pdhPrograms/hpr/wom\\_hlt/sadvhlth.aspx](http://www.odh.ohio.gov/pdhPrograms/hpr/wom_hlt/sadvhlth.aspx)

### **HEALTHY OHIO**

Web Site: <http://www.healthyohioprogram.org>



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## Ohio Department of Health

### VIOLENCE AND INJURY PREVENTION PROGRAM

#### **Sexual Assault And Domestic Violence Prevention Programs:**

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