

MyPlate: Increasing Your Physical Activity

MyPlate is a nutrition tool you can use to help you choose healthy foods. In addition to eating healthy foods, it is important for us to be physically active. Physical activity means moving your body and getting your heart rate up. Your body uses the calories you eat for energy. If you eat more calories than you use, they get stored in your body as fat. Instead, find a balance between the calories you eat and the activities you do.

If your main concern is to reduce your risk of future health problems and prevent disease, you should aim for at least 2 hours and 30 minutes of activity at a moderate level each week. Spreading aerobic activity out over at least 3 days a week is best.

Try taking a brisk walk, gardening, dancing, or biking. Do something fun that gets you moving. As we age, people tend to gain weight gradually. If you want to manage your body weight and prevent that weight gain, try to get 1 hour and 15 minutes of vigorous activity each week. Vigorous activity includes running, competitive sports, swimming, and aerobics.

You should also do strengthening activities like push-ups, sit-ups and lifting weights, at least two days a week. You may want to start walking more often. Walking is something almost everyone can do and will give you health benefits. Count the steps you take with a smart watch or fitness band and aim to reach 10,000 each day.

Gradually build up the intensity and amount of your daily activities to avoid injury. You do not have to do all your physical activity at once. Ten-minute bursts throughout the day can add up and get you to your recommended activity level.

If you have not exercised in a while, or if you have any other health concerns that might be affected by exercise, talk to your healthcare provider before you start an exercise program.

You can take part in lots of different types of physical activity to increase the amount you do each day. The important thing is to find something you enjoy that gets you moving. If you have fun while you are physically active, you will reach your activity goals before you know it!

Visit www.choosemyplate.gov for tips to increase your physical activity.