

October 2023



Musculoskeletal
Health

Let's get moving!

Despite the known benefits exercise has on musculoskeletal, heart, mental, and overall health, more than 80% of American adults do not get enough physical activity. Most adults should aim for 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity each week, and work on muscle-strengthening activities two days per week. It's also helpful to remember that even a small amount of physical activity is better than none. If lately you find yourself sitting more and moving less, consider these tips:

Start small

Whether you are starting from scratch or are resuming your exercise routine after a long break, be sure to keep your progress slow and steady to avoid injury. Try five minutes of walking or 30 seconds of jogging instead of a sprint. Whatever the case, do just a little more than what is usual for you – this is not a time to compare yourself to others.

Keep it simple

You don't need fancy equipment or a gym membership to begin increasing your physical activity. You can walk around the neighborhood or your home, go up and down the stairs, or have a living room dance party. You can sit down and stand back up ten times before you sit down to watch a television show. Anything to add in more movement than you were doing before.

Stay motivated

Treat yourself for meeting your activity goal for the day, week, month, or beyond. For daily movement goals you can try small rewards, like taking time to soak in a bath or watch your favorite TV show. Consider a bigger splurge for a goal that took weeks or months to achieve.

Working out with others can also help us stay motivated. Whether it is meeting a friend for an exercise session, going to a class, or joining a club – having others around keeps you accountable.

Schedule an appointment with yourself

It seems the calendar rules our lives. Instead of trying to find time for activity after everything else has been scheduled, make it a recurring part of your schedule. Add it to your calendar and then hold yourself to it.

Have fun!

Find an activity that you enjoy. Exercise does not need to feel like punishment to be effective. If it gets your heart rate up and you smile while doing it, you're much more likely to keep it up.

Get help

If you can't figure out where to start or you're worried about injury, consider seeking help from a physical therapist. Physical therapists are movement experts who can help you overcome issues and barriers that prevent you from achieving your activity goals.



The musculoskeletal system

The musculoskeletal system works to help you stand, sit, walk, run, and move. Adult bodies have 206 bones and more than 600 muscles connected by ligaments, tendons, and soft tissues.

The parts of the musculoskeletal system are:



Bones: Bones support your body, protect organs and tissues, store calcium and fat, and produce blood cells. Bones provide structure and form for your body.



Cartilage: A type of connective tissue, cartilage cushions bones inside your joints. Firm, rubbery cartilage protects bones from rubbing against each other.



Joints: Bones come together to form joints. Some joints have a large range of motion, such as the ball-and-socket shoulder joint. Other joints, like the knee, allow bones to move back and forth but not rotate.



Muscles: Each muscle is made of thousands of stretchy fibers. Your muscles allow you to move, sit upright, and stay still.



Ligaments: Made of tough collagen fibers, ligaments connect bones and help stabilize joints.



Tendons: Tendons connect muscles to bones. Tendons are tough but not very stretchy.

Sources: [APTA.org](https://www.apta.org), [ACSM.org](https://www.acsm.org), [ClevelandClinic.org](https://www.clevelandclinic.org)

Consult your healthcare provider before beginning a new activity program.

Musculoskeletal Health

Injury and pain



I started a new exercise program, and now I hurt! Am I injured?

Starting a new exercise routine pushes your body to do more than what it is used to. This healthy stress often results in muscle soreness and fatigue, which is a sign that your body is repairing and becoming stronger. Muscle soreness typically peaks between 24-72 hours after exercise. This is referred to as delayed onset muscle soreness (DOMS). Total rest is not recommended when experiencing DOMS, because it can make you feel more sore. Light activity such as walking and stretching can be very helpful in getting through this period of soreness.

What is the difference between pain and muscle soreness?

It is true that soreness is uncomfortable, and some consider it a type of pain. But not all pain means an injury occurred. If you recently started to experience pain after beginning an exercise program or progressing a current one, consider whether your symptoms are due to muscle soreness before assuming you have an injury.

Muscle soreness is often described as muscles feeling tender to the touch and having a burning, tight, or aching feeling when you perform movements that use those

muscles. Light activity can help reduce the soreness temporarily, but symptoms should subside on their own after two or three days.

Pain may also be felt during exercise or within 24 hours after exercise, but it's more likely to be constant and present at rest as well as during activity. Pain can be described as aching, burning, stabbing, or sharp, and may not go away without treatment. Physical therapy can be highly effective for acute and chronic pain.

If you feel your pain is extreme or if it lasts more than 10 days, make an appointment with your doctor or physical therapist. Physical therapists can evaluate you without an order from your provider – just check with your insurance provider to make sure it is covered.

Source: APTA.org

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Keep yourself moving

Consider incorporating these exercises into your daily routine. Always consult your healthcare provider before beginning a new exercise routine.



Wall Planks – Put your forearms flat against a wall while tightening the core and keeping a straight line from the top of your head through your heels. Hold for 60 seconds.



Hip Flexor Stretch – From a kneeling position, keeping an upright torso, shift your weight forward until you feel a stretch in the front of the leg with the knee on the ground. Hold for five to 10 seconds and repeat three to five times on each side.



Standing T's – Start with arms in front, fully extended. With palms facing up, rotate your arms and squeeze your shoulder blades together ending in the T position. Make sure to stand tall and keep an upright posture throughout the movement.