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EXERCISE: HOW MUCH, HOW HARD, HOW OFTEN?



You needn't become a slave to the Stairmaster or tread lonely mile after mile to reap the benefits of exercise. Just get moving.

That's the message of health experts, who urge the nearly 40 percent of Americans who are totally inactive to change their ways. That doesn't necessarily mean participating in strenuous exercise. It means doing enjoyable, moderate exercise, and simply incorporating more physically demanding chores and leisure activities into otherwise sedentary lives.

To achieve the minimum recommended amount of physical activity, you must engage in:

moderate-intensity physical activity at least fivetimes a week, for 30 minutes or more each time. Examples include active gardening, such as raking or pulling weeds, walking, dancing, cycling, or active housework, such as sweeping or vacuuming.

OR

vigorous physical activity at least three times a week, for at least 20 minutes each time. Examples include jogging, running, brisk walking, climbing stairs, playing tennis, or swimming laps.

The 20- or 30- minute quota of activity may be accumulated in several 10-minute segments. Multiple short bursts of activity provide health benefits, though they may not result the same level of physical fitness as exercising steady for longer. Walking 10 minutes mid-morning and at lunch and then raking leaves for 10 minutes before dinner is 30 minutes total of moderate-intensity activity for the day.

AA

You should be exercising enough to burn at least 1,000 calories a week or roughly 150 calories a day.

If you choose to exercise more, you'll reap even greater health benefits.

How long do you have to engage in your favorite activity to burn 150 calories?

Activity	Minutes to burn 150 calories**
Running (6 mph)	14
Climbing stairs	15
Shoveling snow	15
Swimming laps	17
Wheelchair basketball	20
Walking, brisk pace (4 mph)	23
Golf	26
Bicycling (10 mph)	30
Calisthenics	30
Gardening	30
Walking, moderate pace (3 mph)	30
Raking leaves	35
Housework	35
Dancing, ballroom	43
Washing car	45

**average time for a 150 pound adult

Source: Sports & Exercise Nutrition (Lipincott, Williams & Wilkins, 1999)

Benefits of Regular Exercise

- Reduces risk for heart disease, diabetes, and colon cancer
- Helps prevent obesity
- Improves blood cholesterol
- Lowers high blood pressure
- Helps maintain healthy joints
- Improves balance
- Strengthens bones and muscles
- Relieves, and may prevent, depression
- Boosts confidence and self-esteem
- Improves mood and helps relieve anxiety

For more information go to:

The American Council on Exercise at <http://www.acefitness.org>.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/sgr/ataglan.htm>.

Heart Disease Risk Calculator

Another American dies of heart disease every 37 seconds. That's why VCS is committed to finding, treating, and preventing heart disease. What is your risk for heart disease? Are you concerned that a friend or family member might be at risk?

VCS now has a heart disease risk calculator on our website. This risk assessment tool is based on the Framingham Heart Study and is commonly used by physicians to help predict your risk of developing a heart attack or dying from heart disease in the next 10 years. Knowing your risk will help you take control of your heart health and provide you and your physician with the best defense against cardiovascular disease. Visit www.vacardio.com and use the tool yourself - or forward this information to someone you are concerned about. In addition to the risk calculator, you will find a secure, on-line form. If you are concerned about your results, or have questions, complete this form, and one of our nurses will contact you to follow-up.

Study Finds Diet Helps Reverse Artery Hardening

The results of a study published in *Circulation* found that people following one of three types of diets -- low-fat, low-carbohydrate, or Mediterranean -- were able to reverse the artery-hardening process that leads to heart attack and stroke. The authors undertook the current study because, although previous research has shown that lifestyle changes, such as quitting smoking, losing weight, and making dietary changes, can stop hardening of the arteries (atherosclerosis) from worsening, whether or not it can reverse it is unknown. The results of the study suggest that that weight loss from these types of diets can help decrease atherosclerosis.

To read the full article, click [here](#).

Focus On... Lower Extremity Disease

Lower extremity disease, also known as leg artery disease, is a type of peripheral arterial disease. Lower extremity disease can prevent blood from reaching parts of the legs and feet. Lower extremity disease occurs when medium-size or large arteries that supply oxygen-rich blood to the legs and feet are blocked, usually by atherosclerosis. If you have lower extremity or leg artery disease, you may feel some general discomfort in your legs or pain when you walk or after walking. If untreated, you may eventually develop sores on your feet or legs. Leg artery disease can be a serious condition because it can increase your risk of developing other cardiovascular disease, such as heart attacks or stroke. Lower extremity disease is treatable . . . read on to learn more about it.

To read the full article, click [here](#).

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