

# **2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans**

## ***At-A-Glance***

U.S. Department of Health and  
Human Services

# Physical Activity has a Profound Effect Upon Health

- Physical activity is one of the most important steps people can take for their health.



# Background

- Americans are largely inactive.
- Many opportunities for physical activity have been engineered out of daily life.



# *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*

“**The Federal Government published  
comprehensive Physical Activity  
Guidelines for Americans for the first  
time in 2008**”



# Aims of the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans

- Stem the tide toward inactivity and its consequences
- Move toward a prevention oriented society



# What Is New About the Guidelines?

- First major science review in more than a decade.
- Include a range of activity: —The more you do, the more benefits you gain.”
- Specify a total amount of activity per week. People can design their own way to meet the Guidelines.
- Address Americans over the age of 6 and specific subgroups.



# Major Research Findings

- Regular activity reduces risk of many adverse health outcomes
- Some activity is better than none
- Added health benefits generally occur as amount of activity increases
- Most health benefits require at least 2 hours and 30 minutes (150 minutes) a week of moderate-intensity physical activity



# Major Research Findings (cont.)

- Aerobic & muscle-strengthening activity are beneficial
- Health benefits apply to people of all types, sizes, and ages
- Health benefits occur for people with disabilities
- Physical activity can be done safely. Benefits far outweigh possible risks.



# Benefits of Physical Activity

- Adults who participate in any amount of physical activity gain some health benefits.
- A total of 2 hours and 30 minutes (150 minutes) a week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity *substantially* reduces the risk of many chronic diseases and other adverse health outcomes.
- As a person moves from 2 hours and 30 minutes (150 minutes) a week toward 5 hours (300 minutes) a week, he or she gains *additional* health benefits.



# Does Everyone Need the Same Amount of Physical Activity?

- The amount and type of activity needed depends on:
  - age; and
  - special conditions
- Many choices——“Be Active Your Way” means meeting the guidelines based on setting personal goals.



# Key Guidelines – Children and Adolescents (ages 6–17)

- 1 hour (60 minutes) or more of daily physical activity that is at least moderate:
  - Most of the 1 or more hours a day should be either moderate- or vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity.
  - Do vigorous-intensity physical activity at least 3 days a week.



# Key Guidelines – Children and Adolescents (ages 6–17) (cont.)

- As part of 1 or more hours of daily physical activity, include muscle-strengthening activities at least 3 days a week.
- As part of 1 or more hours of daily physical activity, include bone-strengthening activities at least 3 days a week.
- It is important to encourage young people to participate in physical activities that are age appropriate, enjoyable, and offer variety.

# Key Guidelines – Adults (ages 18–64)

- Minimum levels a week
  - 2 hours and 30 minutes (150 minutes) moderate-intensity aerobic activity; or
  - 1 hour and 15 minutes (75 minutes) vigorous-intensity aerobic activity; or
  - An equal combination
- Muscle-strengthening activities that involve all major muscle groups should be performed on 2 or more days of the week.



# Key Guidelines – Adults (ages 18–64) (cont.)

- For additional health benefits
  - 5 hours (300 minutes) moderate-intensity aerobic activity a week; or
  - 2 hours and 30 minutes (150 minutes) vigorous-intensity aerobic activity a week; or
  - An equivalent combination



# Key Guidelines – Older Adults (ages 65 years and older)

- Follow adult guidelines. When not possible, be as physically active as abilities and conditions allow.
- Do exercises that maintain or improve balance if at risk for falling.
- Those without chronic conditions and symptoms (e.g., chest pain or pressure, dizziness, or joint pain) do not need to consult a health care provider about physical activity.



# Additional Considerations

Other subgroups of the population in the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans include:

- Persons with disabilities
- Women during pregnancy and the postpartum period
- Adults with selected chronic conditions



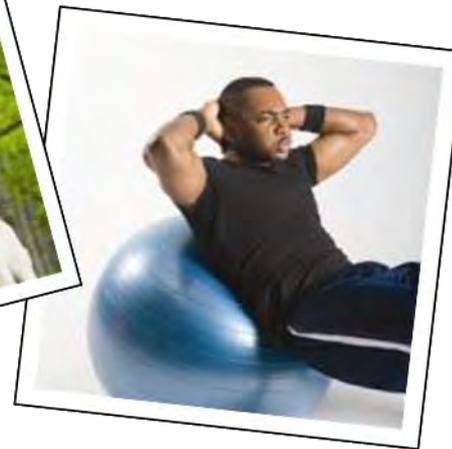
# Physical Activity Guidelines

- For all individuals, some activity is better than none. More is better.
- For fitness benefits, aerobic activity should be episodes of at least 10 minutes.
- Physical activity is safe for almost everyone. The health benefits of physical activity far outweigh the risks.



# What About Using Daily Activity Instead of Weekly for Adults?

- The current Guidelines recommend a total amount of aerobic activity time per week.
- The recommendation of doing 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on 5 days a week is one way to meet the minimum amount recommended.



# What About Most People Who are Inactive?

People Getting Started Should:

- Do what they can and then look for ways to do more.
- Pick an activity they like that fits their lifestyle.
- Get support from friends & family.
- Gradually build up over time. Add more time, then more days before increasing intensity of activity.

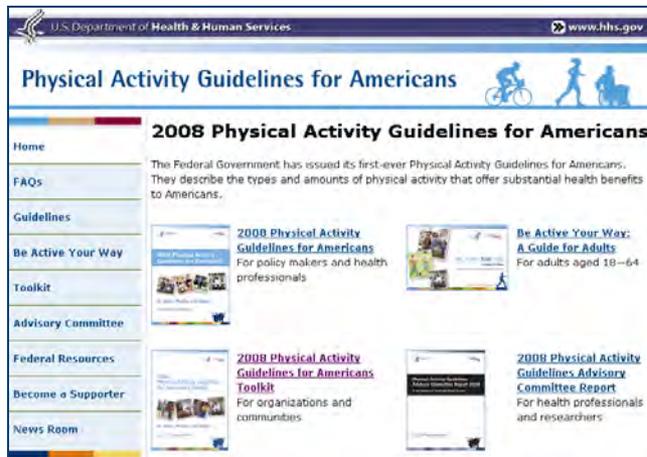


# How Can You Get Involved?

- Sign up as a Supporter & help spread the word about the Physical Activity Guidelines.
- Receive a toolkit filled with outreach information.
- Be listed as a Supporter on the official Physical Activity Guidelines Web site.



# For More Information



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



<http://www.healthfinder.gov/getactive>

**Be Active Your Way!**  
**Be Active, Healthy, and Happy!**

