

Being regularly active is important throughout life:

all children, young adults, older adults and people with various long term medical conditions can gain health benefits by simply doing more. Substantial health benefits are seen in people who regularly do at least 150 minutes (2 hrs 30 mins) a week of moderate intensity physical activity, such as brisk walking. One way to approach this is to do 30 minutes on at least 5

days a week. It's not just physical health that improves it makes you feel good about yourself too.

It is never too late to start. The greatest benefits are seen in those that move away from their sedentary lifestyle. Scientific evidence shows that physically active adults, regardless of weight, have less chance of early death compared to inactive people. Those who maintain an active life live longer, healthier lives.

Cardiovascular disease

Risk of heart disease and stroke is reduced in active people. Increasing exercise also helps people who have already got a heart condition.¹

Blood Pressure

Activity lowers high blood pressure and reduces fat levels, such as cholesterol, in the blood.

Joint Problems

Doing more can improve joint pain and movement in people with osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. Doing nothing at all makes joints worse.

Cancer

People, who have had cancer, enjoy a better quality of life if they are physically active than those who are not. Physical function and mental health improves during and following cancer treatment.

Breast and Colon Cancer

There is a lower risk of these cancers in regularly active adults.

Diabetes

The risk of Type II Diabetes is reduced by 30 to 40% in moderately active people compared with those who do very little. Diabetes control is better in people diagnosed with diabetes too.

Bone and Muscle Health

Older active adults have fewer falls. Risk of hip fracture is also reduced and everyday activities become easier to do.

Mental Health

Activity prevents some types of dementia. It also eases stress, boosts energy, general well-being and self-esteem. Regular exercise is also seen to improve depressive symptoms in those with a diagnosis of depression.²

Obesity

Physical activity helps people maintain a stable weight over time. Remember that being active is good for your health regardless of whether you lose weight or not.



In addition... Regular physical activity also gives you more energy, builds confidence and can help you to sleep more soundly at night. You can combine your activity time with family and friends or use it as an opportunity to reflect on things or listen to your favourite music.

Source: Adapted from Department of Health and Human Services (2008) Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee Report, Washington, DC: US Department of Health and Human Services.

1. Hambrecht R, Walther C, Mobius-Winkler S, et al. Percutaneous coronary angioplasty compared with exercise training in patients with stable coronary artery disease: a randomized trial. *Circulation* 2004; 109: 1371-78

2. Rimer J, Dwan K, Lawlor DA, Greig CA, McMurdo M, Morley W, Mead GE. Exercise for depression. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* 2012, Issue 7. Art. No.: CD004366. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD004366.pub5.