

Types of Activities

Aerobic Activities

Aerobic activities are important for your health. These activities include brisk walking, biking, swimming or dancing. Other activities you can do include playing with your children or your grandchildren, doing housework or working in the garden.



If you are not active, start slowly. The goal is at least 30-minutes of activity most days of the week, but you can split that into several parts. For example, you can take three 10-minute walks during the day. Gradually increase how often and the amount of time and the intensity of your exercise.

- Find an activity that you enjoy.
- Try to alternate the types of activities you do. Walk one day and go dancing the next.
- Invite a friend or your spouse to join you.
- If exercising outdoors, be careful if it is very warm or very cold.

Strength and Balance Activities

Activities that improve your strength and balance are also important and have health benefits. These activities help build strong muscles and bones and may prevent falls.

Do strength and exercises for all major muscle groups week 2-3 days a week. Do not do strength exercises on the same muscle groups (e.g., arms, legs, and trunk) two days in a row. Muscles need at least a day to recover from strength activities. This will help to avoid injury and soreness. Be sure to warm-up, cool-down, and stretch whenever you are active.

For more information on specific strength activities see *MOVE!* Handout P32 "Sample Strength Activity Plan for Beginners" at www.move.va.gov.



Types of Activities

Stretching Activities

Stretching activities help increase your flexibility. They can also make everyday activities like bending to tie your shoes easier. Stretching exercises can also help as you recover from an injury. They may even prevent an injury from happening. Stretch in both directions. If you stretch to the left don't forget to stretch to the right.

Stretch slowly and smoothly.

Stretch to a point where you place mild, but not painful, stretch on the muscles. When you repeat the stretch, you should be able to go a little further without pain.

Hold each stretch for 10-30 seconds. Repeat each stretch 3-5 times. Breathe slowly in and out without holding your breath.

If a stretch causes too much pain, stop doing it, or do it more gently. Listen to your body!

If you have questions about physical activity, talk with your health care team.

