

Physical Activity: A Key Element of Good Health

The evidence is more convincing than ever: people of all ages who are generally not active can improve their health through physical activity. Physical activity can help to

- Control weight.
- Control high blood pressure.
- Reduce risk for type 2 diabetes, heart attack, and colon cancer.
- Reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- Reduce arthritis pain and disability.
- Prevent osteoporosis and falls.

Trails: A Fun Place to Be Active

Although regular physical activity offers many health benefits, people who are seeking ways to become more active often overlook the opportunities that trails offer. Trails can be found everywhere, from national and state parks to urban areas. They provide a wide variety of ways to be physically active and have fun:

- Walking, jogging, running, and hiking.
- Rollerblading/in-line skating.
- Wheelchair recreation.
- Bicycling.
- Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.
- Fishing.
- Hunting.
- Horseback riding.
- Canoeing or kayaking on water trails.



"Hitting the nation's many trails and pathways is a great way for all Americans to have fun and, at the same time, get some valuable exercise."

— Julie L. Gerberding, MD, MPH
Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



Taking Steps to Be More Active

Overcoming common stumbling blocks to physical activity can help you make physical activity a regular part of your life:

Not enough time? Start by doing 10 minutes of physical activity a day and gradually work your way up to 30 minutes. Choose activities that require minimal time, such as walking, jogging, or biking.

Can't get motivated? Plan ahead. Make physical activity a regular part of your schedule. Invite a friend to exercise with you regularly. Join a group, such as a hiking or walking club.

No place to be active? Look around your community for inexpensive, convenient places for physical activity, such as trails, parks, and community centers.

No athletic skills? Choose physical activities such as walking that require no new skills. You don't need to be athletic to exercise.

How Much Is Enough?

Physical activity does not need to be hard to provide benefits. Adults should get at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity (such as brisk walking) on five or more days per week, according to recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American College of Sports Medicine.



"Few factors contribute so much to successful aging as regular physical activity, and it's never too late to start."

— **Tommy G. Thompson**
Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

National Trails Day

Held the first Saturday of every June, National Trails Day is a nationwide celebration of trails that features more than 2,000 events hosted by trail clubs, conservation organizations, agencies, and businesses.

Available Resources

Local Trails and Trail Clubs

For information on more than 30,000 trails, visit the Trail Finder at the American Hiking Society's Web site: <http://www.americanhiking.org>.

National Parks and Forests

For the location of National Recreation Trails, visit <http://www.recreation.gov>. For volunteer opportunities in national parks and forests, visit <http://www.volunteer.gov>.

HealthierUS

Visit the HealthierUS Web site for information on fitness, preventive screening, nutrition, and healthy choices as well as volunteer and recreation information: <http://www.healthierUS.gov>.



Physical Activity

To learn more about how to make physical activity a regular part of your life, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Web site: <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa> and the Web site of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports: www.fitness.gov.

For more information, write to

TRAILS FOR HEALTH
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
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Atlanta, GA 30341-3717
E-mail: ccdinfo@cdc.gov

Trails for Health

Increasing Opportunities for Physical Activity in the Community



"Our nation's trails, parks, lakes, and rivers provide numerous opportunities for recreation and physical activity. As manager of many of these public lands, the Department of the Interior supports the President's goal for a healthier and more active America."

— **Gale A. Norton**
Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior

