

Physical Wellness Checklist

Positive physical health habits can help decrease your stress, lower your risk of disease, and increase your energy. Here are tips for improving your physical health:



GET ACTIVE

Sedentary behavior has been linked to many medical problems. Moving more and sitting less can have major health benefits. Experts recommend adults get at least 150 minutes (two and a half hours) of moderate physical activity a week. You can benefit from even a little activity at a time. Every minute counts when it comes to movement.

To increase your activity:

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Walk on a treadmill while watching TV or stand while using your computer.
- Try an online exercise class to stay active from home.
- Set an alarm to go off every hour as a reminder to move around.
- Have small weights in your office or home for doing arm exercises.
- Take a walk on your lunch breaks.



MAINTAIN YOUR MUSCLE

Building muscle helps you keep up the activities you enjoy. Some types of strength training keep your bones healthy, too. Experts recommend doing strength training for all the major muscle groups two or more days a week for adults and three for kids and teens.

To build muscle safely:

- Start slowly. Pay attention to your body. Pain means you're overdoing it.
- Use small amounts of weight to start.
- Use smooth, steady movements. Don't jerk or thrust weights.
- Avoid "locking" your joints.
- Don't hold your breath during exercises.



EAT A HEALTHY DIET

We make dozens of decisions every day. When it comes to deciding what to eat and feed our families, it can be a lot easier than you might think to make smart choices. A healthy eating plan not only limits unhealthy foods, but also includes a variety of healthy foods. Find out which foods to add to your diet and which to avoid.

To eat a healthier diet:

- Eat a variety of foods—vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, nuts, seeds, lean meat, seafood, eggs, milk, yogurt, and cheese.
- Limit foods low in vitamins and minerals.
- Cut down on sugar.
- Replace saturated fats in your diet with unsaturated fats. Use vegetable oils instead of butter, meat fats, or shortening.
- Get more fiber.
- Choose more complex carbs, like whole-grain breads, starchy vegetables, or legumes.
- Watch out for foods high in salt.



MIND YOUR METABOLISM

Your metabolism changes as you get older. You burn fewer calories and break down foods differently. You also lose lean muscle. Unless you exercise more and adjust your diet, the pounds can add up. Middle-age spread can quickly become middle-age sprawl. Carrying those extra pounds may be harming your health.

To combat age-related changes:

- Commit to a healthy diet.
- Limit snacking.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Move more. Take the stairs and add walking breaks to your day.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Limit alcohol use.
- Avoid tobacco products. When you quit smoking, you may improve many aspects of your health and are likely to add years to your life.



BUILD HEALTHY HABITS

We know that making healthy choices can help us feel better and live longer. Maybe you've already tried to eat better, get more exercise or sleep, quit smoking, or reduce stress. It's not easy. But research shows how you can boost your ability to create and sustain a healthy lifestyle.

To build healthy habits:

- Plan. Set realistic goals.
- Change your surroundings. Remove temptations.
- Ask for support.
- Fill your time with healthy activities.
- Track your progress.
- Imagine the future.
- Reward yourself.
- Be patient. Improvement takes time, and setbacks happen. Focus on progress, not perfection.



FIND A HEALTHY WEIGHT

Keeping your body at a healthy weight may help you lower your risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain types of cancer that can result from being overweight or obese. Take charge of your weight and your health.

To reach your weight loss goals:

- Eat smaller portions.
- Eat colorful vegetables each day.
- Choose whole grains.
- Go easy on sugar, fats, and oils.
- Stick with activities you enjoy.
- Go for a brisk walk, ride a bike, or do some gardening.
- Do strengthening activities.
- Get active for just 10 minutes, several times a day. Every little bit counts!
- Keep a food and physical activity diary.
- Be realistic and aim for slow, modest weight loss.