

Topic of the Month

Free - Help Yourself!

## The Big Picture

Too few Americans get the recommended amount of physical activity.



Only **1 in 5** adults and **1 in 5** high school students fully meet physical activity guidelines for aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities.

**31** MILLION

About **31 million** adults aged 50 or older are inactive, meaning they get no physical activity beyond that of daily living.

### PHYSICAL INACTIVITY COSTS LIVES & DOLLARS



Inactivity contributes to **1 in 10** premature deaths.

**\$117** BILLION

Inadequate levels of physical activity are associated with **\$117 billion** in annual health care costs.



Only **40%** of school-aged youth who live a mile or less from school report that they usually walk to school.

<https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/>

# Active Living

## Benefits Every Body

What if your health care provider could write you a prescription that would reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease, Type 2 Diabetes, and cancer, lower your blood pressure, and improve your cholesterol levels, while at the same time it improves your mental health, mood and sleep, as well as your ability to do your daily activities, prevents falls, strengthens your bones and muscles, and increases your chances of living a longer, healthier, happier life? *Would you get that prescription filled?*



30 minutes a day! Kids need about 60 minutes each day. And while it's not true for everything, in the case of physical activity - more is better.

None of us are sedentary or active in a vacuum.

You can! These are some of the bonuses of becoming more physically active. These benefits are available to most everyone, at every age and stage of life, even if someone has health conditions.

Here's how:

1. Start slowly. You don't have to go from couch potato to ultra-marathoner. Think about ways that you enjoy moving, and then do them - adding more time and intensity as you feel comfortable.
2. If you have a chronic health condition, such as diabetes, arthritis, or heart disease, talk with your health care provider to find out if your condition limits your ability to be active. But "limits" probably won't mean "eliminates." With your provider, explore ways to create an activity plan that works with the reality of your abilities.

We're doing (or not doing) things in a place - often in a "built environment." The way a town is designed can greatly impact how active its residents are. When people feel safe from crime and dangerous traffic, and when streets and sidewalks are well-maintained and scenic, children, families, and elders are all more likely to be physically active. Five years ago, our community was the fortunate recipient of funding from the Center for Prevention at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota. Out of this was born the Moving Matters project. Sawtooth Mountain Clinic and many partners have worked together to creating active living and pedestrian plans, build new sidewalks, bike trail connections and bike maintenance stations, support the "Safe Routes to School" program, a Health Impact Assessment on the Highway 61 corridor, and support the "Workers on Wheels" program.

This place we call home has always been a beautiful place for active living. As we continue to work together, it's becoming a safer place for active living as well!

Taking care of ourselves can take a lot of support. We're here to help! Ask a nurse or provider if you'd like to talk.

How much activity should you shoot for? Just 150 minutes a week puts adults at a lower risk for many diseases. That's only

[cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/pa-health/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/pa-health/index.htm)

# What Can We ALL Do To Promote Active Living?

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## **State, Tribal, Local and Territorial Governments Can:**

- Design safe neighborhoods that encourage physical activity (e.g., include sidewalks, bike lanes, adequate lighting, multi-use trails, walkways, and parks).
- Convene partners (e.g., engineers, transportation, law enforcement, public health, planners, architects, developers) to consider health impacts when making transportation or land use decisions.
- Support schools and early learning centers in meeting physical activity guidelines.

## **Businesses and Employers Can:**

- Adopt policies and programs that promote walking, bicycling, and use of public transportation (e.g., provide access to fitness equipment and facilities, bicycle racks, walking paths, and changing facilities with showers).
- Design or redesign communities to promote opportunities for active transportation (e.g., include places for physical activity in building and development plans).
- Sponsor a new or existing park, playground, or trail, recreation or scholastic program, or beautification or maintenance project.

## **Health Care Systems, Insurers, and Clinicians Can:**

- Conduct physical activity assessments, provide counseling, and refer patients to allied health care or health and fitness professionals.
- Support clinicians in implementing physical activity assessments, counseling, and referrals (e.g., provide training to clinicians, implement clinical reminder systems).

## **Early Learning Centers, Schools, Colleges, and Universities Can:**

- Provide daily physical education and recess that focuses on maximizing time physically active.
- Participate in fitness testing (e.g., the President's Challenge) and support individualized self improvement plans.
- Support walk and bike to schools programs (e.g., "Safe Routes to School") and work with local governments to make decisions about selecting school sites that can promote physical activity.
- Limit passive screen time.
- Make physical activity facilities available to the local community.

## **Community, Non-Profit, and Faith-Based Organizations Can:**

- Offer low or no-cost physical activity programs (e.g., intramural sports, physical activity clubs).
- Develop and institute policies and joint use agreements that address liability concerns and encourage shared use of physical activity facilities (e.g., school gymnasiums, community recreation centers).
- Offer opportunities for physical activity across the lifespan (e.g., exercise classes for seniors).

## **Individuals and Families Can:**

- Engage in at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity each week (adults) or at least one hour of activity each day (children).
- Supplement aerobic activities with muscle strengthening activities on two or more days a week that involve all major muscle groups.
- Consider following the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommendations for limiting screen time for children.