We are well into the New Year and I just know that we are sticking to the resolutions to lose weight and exercise that we’ve made, right? Just in case you are having a problem, the final discussion of this topic is the focus of this February issue of Health and Safety News. Hopefully this edition will provide some useful information for those who may need just a little help to stay on track for reaching those weight loss goals. The December 2010 newsletter focused on healthy weight and the January 2011 issue focused on weight loss. The focus of this issue will be to provide information about being physically active to help with your new weight loss routine. The topics discussed in this edition include information that was taken directly from the CDC’s website. If you’d like more information, please visit http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/physical_activity/index.html and http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/physical_activity/getting_started.html. To read more about the topics in the blue font, click the mouse and select Allow.

Healthy Weight

Physical Activity for a Healthy Weight

Regular physical activity is important for good health, and it’s especially important if you're trying to lose weight or to maintain a healthy weight.

- When losing weight, more physical activity increases the number of calories your body uses for energy or "burns off." The burning of calories through physical activity, combined with reducing the number of calories you eat, creates a "calorie deficit" that results in weight loss.
- Most weight loss occurs because of decreased caloric intake. However, evidence shows the only way to maintain weight loss is to be engaged in regular physical activity.
- Most importantly, physical activity reduces risks of cardiovascular disease and diabetes beyond that produced by weight reduction alone.
Physical activity also helps to—

- Maintain weight.
- Reduce high blood pressure.
- Reduce risk for type 2 diabetes, heart attack, stroke, and several forms of cancer.
- Reduce arthritis pain and associated disability.
- Reduce risk for osteoporosis and falls.
- Reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety.

**How much physical activity do I need?**

When it comes to weight management, people vary greatly in how much physical activity they need. Here are some guidelines to follow:

**To maintain your weight:** Work your way up to 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity, 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity, or an equivalent mix of the two each week. Strong scientific evidence shows that physical activity can help you maintain your weight over time. However, the exact amount of physical activity needed to do this is not clear since it varies greatly from person to person. It's possible that you may need to do more than the equivalent of 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity a week to maintain your weight.

**To lose weight and keep it off:** You will need a high amount of physical activity unless you also adjust your diet and reduce the amount of calories you're eating and drinking. Getting to and staying at a healthy weight requires both regular physical activity and a healthy eating plan.

What do moderate- and vigorous-intensity mean?

**Moderate:** While performing the physical activity, if your breathing and heart rate is noticeably faster but you can still carry on a conversation — it's probably moderately intense. Examples include—
• Walking briskly (a 15-minute mile).
• Light yard work (raking/bagging leaves or using a lawn mower).
• Light snow shoveling.
• Actively playing with children.
• Biking at a casual pace.

**Vigorous:** Your heart rate is increased substantially and you are breathing too hard and fast to have a conversation, it's probably vigorously intense. Examples include—

• Jogging/running.
• Swimming laps.
• Rollerblading INLINE skating at a brisk pace.
• Cross-country skiing.
• Most competitive sports (football, basketball, or soccer).
• Jumping rope.

**How many calories are used in typical activities?**

The following table shows calories used in common physical activities at both moderate and vigorous levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moderate Physical Activity</th>
<th>Approximate Calories/30 Minutes for a 154 lb Person</th>
<th>Approximate Calories/Hr for a 154 lb Person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hiking</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light gardening/yard work</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dancing</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf (walking and carrying clubs)</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycling (&lt;10 mph)</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking (3.5 mph)</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight lifting (general light workout)</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stretching</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Vigorous Physical Activity | Approximate Calories/30 Minutes for a 154 lb Person¹ | Approximate Calories/Hr for a 154 lb Person¹ |
--- | --- | --- |
Running/jogging (5 mph) | 295 | 590 |
Bicycling (>10 mph) | 295 | 590 |
Swimming (slow freestyle laps) | 255 | 510 |
Aerobics | 240 | 480 |
Walking (4.5 mph) | 230 | 460 |
Heavy yard work (chopping wood) | 220 | 440 |
Weight lifting (vigorous effort) | 220 | 440 |
Basketball (vigorous) | 220 | 440 |

¹Calories burned per hour will be higher for persons who weigh more than 154 lbs (70 kg) and lower for persons who weigh less.

Source: Adapted from *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005, page 16, Table 4.*

To help estimate the intensity of your physical activity, see [Physical Activity for Everyone: Measuring Physical Activity Intensity](#).

**Getting Started with Physical Activity for a Healthy Weight**

**Should I take any precautions before becoming more active?**

People with chronic diseases, such as a heart condition, arthritis, diabetes, or high blood pressure, should talk to their doctor about what types and amounts of physical activity are appropriate.

**Get Motivated!**

If you've not been physically active in a while, you may be wondering how to get started again. Lace up those sneakers and find some motivating ideas here.

Here are some tips to help get you started:
• Look for opportunities to reduce sedentary time and to increase active time. For example, instead of watching TV, try taking a walk after dinner.
• Set aside specific times for physical activity in your schedule to make it part of your daily or weekly routine.
• Start with activities, locations, and times you enjoy. For example, some people might like walking in their neighborhood in the mornings; others might prefer an exercise class at a health club after work.
• Try activities with friends or family members to help with motivation and mutual encouragement.
• Start slowly and work your way up to more physically challenging activities. For many people, walking is a particularly good place to begin.
• When necessary, break up your daily activity goal into smaller amounts of time. For example, you could break the 30-minute a day recommendation into three 10-minute sessions or two 15-minute sessions. Just make sure the shorter sessions are at least 10 minutes long.

For many people, walking offers a great way to become more active. For some ideas on how to begin, see the walking plans at the following sites:

• Weight-control Information Network: Walking — A Step in the Right Direction
• American Heart Association: Start! Walking*

For more information about physical activity if you're overweight or obese, suggestions for initial activities, and safety tips, see Active at Any Size.

Strategies for Overcoming Obstacles to Physical Activity

If you're just getting started, you might face certain obstacles that seem difficult to overcome. A few examples of common obstacles and strategies for overcoming them are shown in the following table.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Obstacle</th>
<th>Try This</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I just don't have <strong>time</strong> to be physically active.</td>
<td>Identify available time slots. Monitor your daily activities for one week. Identify at least three 30-minute time slots you could use for physical activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't have anyone to go with me.</td>
<td>Develop new friendships with physically active people. Join a group, such as the YMCA or a hiking club.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm so tired when I get home from work.</td>
<td>Schedule physical activity for times in the day or week when you feel energetic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have so much on my &quot;to do&quot; list already, how can I do physical activity too?</td>
<td>Plan ahead. Make physical activity a regular part of your daily or weekly schedule by writing it on your calendar. Keep the appointment with yourself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'll probably hurt myself if I try to be more physically active.</td>
<td>Consult with a health professional or educational material to learn how to exercise appropriately considering your age, fitness level, skill level, and health status.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm not coordinated enough to be physically active. I can't learn something new at my age!</td>
<td>Select activities requiring no new skills, such as walking, climbing stairs, or jogging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My job requires me to be on the road, it's impossible for me to exercise.</td>
<td>Stay in places with swimming pools or exercise facilities. Or find a DVD exercise tape that you enjoy and request a DVD player with your room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have small children and it's impossible to have time to myself for exercise.</td>
<td>Trade babysitting time with a friend, neighbor, or family member who also has small children. As children get older, family bike rides or walks might be another option.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Physical Activity for Everyone: Making Physical Activity Part of Your Life: [Overcoming Barriers to Physical Activity](#).

**MAKE EXERCISING A PRIORITY!**
When trying to keep the weight off, don’t forget…

Keeping It Off

If you’ve recently lost excess weight, congratulations! It's an accomplishment that will likely benefit your health now and in the future. Now that you’ve lost weight, let's talk about some ways to maintain that success.

The following tips are some of the common characteristics among people who have successfully lost weight and maintained that loss over time.¹

- Watch Your Diet
- Be Active
- Stay on Course

Watch Your Diet

- **Follow a healthy and realistic eating pattern.** You have embarked on a healthier lifestyle, now the challenge is maintaining the positive eating habits you’ve developed along the way. In studies of people who have lost weight and kept it off for at least a year, most continued to eat a diet lower in calories as compared to their pre-weight loss diet.² For more suggestions regarding a healthful diet, visit Healthy Eating for a Healthy Weight.

- **Keep your eating patterns consistent.** Follow a healthy eating pattern regardless of changes in your routine. Plan ahead for weekends, vacations, and special occasions. By making a plan, it is more likely you'll have healthy foods on hand for when your routine changes.

- **Eat breakfast every day.** Eating breakfast is a common trait among people who have lost weight and kept it off. Eating a healthful breakfast may help you avoid getting "over-hungry" and then overeating later in the day.

Be Active

- **Get daily physical activity.** People who have lost weight and kept it off typically engage in 60—90 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity most days of the week while not exceeding...
calorie needs. This doesn't necessarily mean 60—90 minutes at one time. It might mean 20—30 minutes of physical activity three times a day. For example, a brisk walk in the morning, at lunch time, and in the evening. Some people may need to talk to their healthcare provider before participating in this level of physical activity.

Stay on Course

- **Monitor your diet and activity.** Keeping a food and physical activity journal can help you track your progress and spot trends. For example, you might notice that your weight creeps up during periods when you have a lot of business travel or when you have to work overtime. Recognizing this tendency can be a signal to try different behaviors, such as packing your own healthful food for the plane and making time to use your hotel's exercise facility when you are traveling. Or if working overtime, maybe you can use your breaks for quick walks around the building.
- **Monitor your weight.** Check your weight regularly. When managing your weight loss, it’s a good idea to keep track of your weight so you can plan accordingly and adjust your diet and exercise plan as necessary. If you have gained a few pounds, get back on track quickly.
- **Get support from family, friends, and others.** People who have successfully lost weight and kept it off often rely on support from others to help them stay on course and get over any "bumps." Sometimes having a friend or partner who is also losing weight or maintaining a weight loss can help you stay motivated.
References

1 National Weight Control Registry* The National Weight Control Registry (NWCR) was developed to identify and investigate the characteristics of individuals who have succeeded at long-term weight loss. The NWCR is tracking over 5,000 individuals who have lost significant amounts of weight and kept it off for long periods of time.