



## What You Should Know About Exercise

### Why is exercise important to me?

Exercise is important for many reasons:

- It helps you lose excess weight and keep the weight off.
- It helps prevent many diseases including diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, chronic kidney disease, cancer, osteoporosis and arthritis.
- It helps prevent high blood cholesterol.
- It helps build strength and endurance.
- It helps prevent injuries.
- It builds self-confidence and self-esteem.

### What types of exercise can benefit my health?

Many types of exercise can benefit your health, such as:

- walking
- taking part in a sport
- doing household chores
- gardening
- aerobic exercises (e.g., brisk walking, jogging, swimming, biking).

### Can anyone exercise?

Yes. However, it's important that the type of activity is appropriate to your:

- age
- physical condition
- level of ability.

If you have any chronic illnesses, it's important to check with your doctor before you start.

### How often should I exercise?

If you have not exercised for a while, you should start with mild exercises for 10 to 15 minutes a day. You should gradually add more strenuous exercises, such as aerobic exercises, and extend the time until you reach 30 to 60 minutes most days of the week.

### What is aerobic exercise?

Aerobic exercise is more strenuous exercise that does the following:

- increases your heart rate
- makes you breathe deeply
- moves your large muscle groups.

Some examples of aerobic exercise are:

- brisk walking
- aerobic dancing
- jogging
- skiing
- cycling
- using exercise equipment like a treadmill or exercise bike
- swimming.

### Is it important to stretch before and after exercising?

Yes. Stretching before and after exercising helps to prevent injuries and strengthens your muscles and bones.

### I'm so busy. How can I find time to exercise?

Anyone can work some exercise into the daily schedule. You can do many exercises at home, outdoors or even at work. Here are some suggestions:

- Exercise while watching TV. You can do stretching exercises or use free weights or exercise equipment such as an exercise bike.
- Exercise around the neighborhood. You can bike to the store, work in the garden, mow the lawn or take out a ball or frisbee and offer to play a game with the kids.
- Exercise at work. Park your car at a distance or get off the bus a stop early and walk 10 minutes to the office. Take the stairs instead of the elevator, take a brisk walk on your lunch hour, or join the team if your company participates in recreational sports.

### How can I make exercise a habit?

- Choose something you like to do.
- Find a partner, someone to exercise with you.
- Alternate your routine: walk one day, dance the next.
- Make exercise fun: exercise with a group or exercise to music.
- Stay positive: don't worry if you do not see progress right away. It may take weeks before you notice any change.
- Check your progress: see if you can walk a longer distance or exercise for longer periods of time without getting tired.

### For more information:

- Call the National Kidney Foundation's toll-free number 1-800-622-9010.

If you would like to become a volunteer and find out more about what's happening where you live, [contact your local NKF Affiliate](#).

If you would like more information, please [contact us](#).

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