

Regular Exercise Helps Protect Your Family Against Kidney Disease

Regular physical activity is associated with better health. It is especially important for those with high blood pressure, diabetes, kidney disease, and heart disease. The *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans* states that “regular physical activity over months and years can produce long-term health benefits.”

What Are the Benefits of Regular Physical Activity?

Regular physical activity can help you

- Lower your risk of heart attack, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and some cancers
- Control your blood pressure
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Reduce anxiety, stress, and depression
- Improve sleep and energy levels
- Improve quality of life

Regular physical activity can help slow the progression of kidney disease. In most cases exercise is safe for people who are on dialysis or have received a kidney transplant. Talk with your provider about the best exercise options for you.

How Much Physical Activity Do I Need?

Any physical activity is better than none. Physical activity is moving your body. It can be as simple as walking the dog, mowing the grass, or vacuuming the rug. For the most health benefit, Guidelines recommend that all adults (even those with chronic health conditions) do both aerobic physical activity and muscle-strengthening activity.



Here is a brief summary. To learn more, go to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website.

Type	Description	How Much?
Moderate-intensity aerobic activity	Anything that gets your heart beating faster	At least 150 minutes a week (for example, 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week)
Muscle-strengthening activity	Activities that make your muscles work harder than usual; include all major muscles groups—legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms	At least 2 days a week

What About Other Types of Physical Activities?

Other types of physical activities help strengthen bones, improve balance, and increase flexibility.

- **Bone-strengthening activities** can be both aerobic and muscle strengthening. This type of exercise puts force on the bones and helps them grow stronger. Some examples are brisk walking, running, jumping jacks, and weight-lifting exercises.
- **Balance exercises** focus on improving balance while a person is either standing still or walking. These exercises help prevent falls. Some examples are yoga poses for balance, standing on one leg, and walking backwards. Try to do balance exercises at least 3 days a week or more.
- **Flexibility activities** help keep joints flexible enough to move through a full range of motion. Some examples are stretching, yoga, Qigong, and Tai Chi. Try to do flexibility exercises at least 2 days a week or more.

How Can I Make Exercise a Habit?

Here are 5 strategies for increasing exercise:

- 1 Use every opportunity to walk.** Park at the edge of the parking lot. Walk to the store or to work instead of driving if it's reasonable. Walk when you talk on the phone instead of sitting. Walk around the neighborhood when listening to podcasts.
- 2 Piggyback exercise onto another habit.** For example, if you always watch a comedy show on TV on Tuesdays, do strength training exercises during that one show. If you always let your dog out in the backyard after dinner, take the dog on a walk around the block first.
- 3 Get a fitness accountability buddy.** Pair up with a friend to encourage each other to exercise. Text each other your fitness goals and activity for the day. This can be motivating and fun for both of you.
- 4 Set a daily step goal and wear a pedometer.** Get a device that tracks your steps. Some mobile phones have apps that work as pedometers, or you can buy an inexpensive one that clips to your belt. Wear the pedometer for a few days to see how many steps you typically walk. Then add 500 steps to that as your first goal. Keep that goal for a week, then add 500 more. Accomplishing your step goal is very motivating over time.
- 5 Try new activities.** Doing the same exercise routine gets boring after a period of time. Try new activities to keep interested and motivated. What about hiking, gardening, or dancing?