

Staying Active During COVID-19

Regular physical activity remains an important strategy for staying healthy. Moderate intensity physical activity is associated with better immune function, lower levels of anxiety, and perceived stress. With gyms and fitness facilities closing across the nation, and local “stay at home” or “shelter-in-place” regulations in place, all should be encouraged to be active at home while maintaining safe distance from others.

The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommend 150-300 minutes per week of moderate intensity aerobic physical activity, and 2 sessions per week of muscle strength training. Fit in 2, 5, 10 or 20 minutes, however and wherever you can. Every active minute counts!

Aerobic Activities

Indoor Activities

- Put some music on and walk briskly around the house or up and down the stairs for 10-15 minutes 2 or 3 times per day
- Dance to your favorite music
- Jump rope
- Do an exercise video
- Use home cardio machines if you have them

Outdoor Activities

- Walk or jog around your neighborhood (avoid crowded spaces and maintain physical distancing of at least 6 feet)
- Spend time in nature, and be sure to wash your hands when you get home
- Go for a bicycle ride
- Do gardening and lawn work
- Play active games with your family

Muscle Strength Training

- Download a strength workout app to your smart phone, such as the 7-Minute Workout (no equipment necessary)
- Do a strength training video
- Try yoga – deep breathing and mindfulness can also reduce anxiety
- Find ways to do simple muscle strengthening exercises around your house such as:
 - Squats or sit-to-stands from a sturdy chair
 - Push-ups against a wall, the kitchen counter or the floor
 - Lunges or single leg step-ups on stairs
- If watching TV, get up periodically and do a lap around your place or an active chore. For example, throw some clothes in the laundry, do the dishes or take out the garbage. Feel productive after just one show!

Frequently asked questions about physical activity and exercise with respect to COVID-19:

- I'm under quarantine but *not* infected. Should I limit my physical activity?
 - There are no recommendations at this time to limit physical activity if you do not have any symptoms. Symptoms that should prompt evaluation by a healthcare provider include cough, fever, and shortness of breath.
- Will exercise help prevent me from getting the virus?
 - Moderate-intensity physical activity is associated with a healthier immune system. However high-intensity high-volume training may suppress immune function especially if you are unaccustomed to it. Balance your workout program.
- Are there precautions I should take?
 - **The most important strategy to prevent infection is to avoid coming into contact with others who are infected with COVID-19.**
- What if my kids are home with me?
 - Being active with kids is the most fun of all! Find activities that you can do together – an active gaming video or go for a walk in the neighborhood.
- What if I start to experience symptoms?
 - Those experiencing symptoms should follow the CDC recommendations. As these recommendations are changing, below is a link to the CDC Symptoms webpage <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/symptoms.html>
- I'm under quarantine and infected. Should I limit my physical activity?
 - People who are known to be infected, but asymptomatic, can continue moderate intensity physical activity, but need to use symptoms as a guide. *They should take care to maintain quarantine to prevent virus transmission to others.* If they develop fever, cough or shortness of breath, they should discontinue physical activities and reach out to a healthcare provider.

For more information or to schedule a lifestyle medicine consultation:

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