



## JUST MOVE IT!

[www.MobileCountyHealth.org](http://www.MobileCountyHealth.org)

Your physical activity program can be as simple as a 15-minute walk around the block each morning and evening. Gradually build up your program and set new goals to stay motivated. The important thing is to find something you enjoy, and do it safely. And remember, trying too hard at first can lead to injury and cause you to give up. If you have a chronic health problem or a family history of heart disease at an early age, be sure to talk with your doctor before launching a new physical activity program.

### COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

• **How can I fit physical activity into my busy schedule?**

Try breaking up your 30 minutes of activity throughout the day. For instance, take a brisk walk (3-4 miles per hour) in the morning for 10 minutes, rake leaves for 10 minutes, and take another 10-minute walk after dinner.

• **I am elderly and have difficulty moving. Should I still try to exercise?**

Yes, but be sure you talk to your doctor first to find out which activities are right for you. There are even activities you can do while sitting down.

• **How can I prevent injuries?**

Gradually build up the intensity and duration of your physical activity program over many weeks or months to avoid overdoing it. And always stretch before and after.

### TIPS FOR BECOMING—AND STAYING—A HEALTHIER YOU

- **Set a schedule and keep to it.**
- **Get a friend or family member to join you.** Motivate each other to keep it up.
- **Cross-train.** Alternate between different activities so you do not strain one part of the body day after day.
- **Set goals.**
- **Reward yourself.** At the end of each month that you stay on your exercise program, reward yourself with something new—new clothes, a compact disc, a new book—something that will help keep you committed. But don't use food as a reward.

### TIPS TO EASILY INCREASE YOUR DAILY ACTIVITY

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Park far away from your destination in parking lots so you have farther to walk.
- If you take public transportation, get off a stop early.
- If your blood pressure is moderately elevated, 30 minutes of brisk walking most days a week may be enough to keep you off medication.
- If you take medication for high blood pressure, 30 minutes of moderate physical activity can make your medication work more effectively and make you feel better.
- If you don't have high blood pressure, being physically active can help keep it that way. If you have normal blood pressure—but are not active—your chances of developing high blood pressure increase, especially as you get older or if you become overweight or obese or develop diabetes.

### OTHER PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

- **Home care and general cleaning**
- **Mowing the lawn** (with power mower)
- **Dancing**
- **Racket sports, such as table tennis**
- **Swimming** (with moderate effort)
- **Canoeing or rowing** (about 2-3.9 miles per hour)
- **Home repair, such as painting**
- **Gardening**
- **Golf** (walking the course)
- **Cycling** (10 miles per hour or less)
- **Fishing** (standing and casting, walking, or wading)