

If you have any questions, ask your care team.

Get Moving for Better Health

Movement is an important part of your health. We all need to move to keep our bodies and minds healthy.

Benefits of moving

Regular movement makes your bones, joints and muscles stronger. It also has an anti-inflammatory effect in the body, which helps lower the risk for these conditions:

- Some cancers
- Cardiovascular diseases
- Type 2 diabetes
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- Joint pain

Exercise is good for the brain, too. It helps protect against dementia. It may lessen the symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Plan to get moving

You have lots of ways to move. Do not get hung up on the word “exercise.” The most important thing is to find ways to regularly move your body. Some movement is better than no movement. For example, 5 minutes of walking every day is 100% better than no walking.

You could take several 5-minute walks during the day. You could set an alarm to stand up every few hours at work. Start with simple habits that work with your lifestyle. Here are some ideas.

Think about activities

Think about the activities you like to do. Think about sports teams you were on as a child or even your favorite games from the schoolyard. There are many fun ways to put movement into your day or week.

Here are some other ways to get active:

- Join a local sports club. Check out your park district’s recreation offerings.
- If you liked to dance when you were younger, find an adult dance class or Zumba class. Try out a dance class on YouTube. Or just set a timer and play your favorite songs to dance to at home.
- Try skating. Find a roller-skating rink.
- Play Frisbee, kickball or soccer, or any of your favorite schoolyard games with your family or friends.

- Try an app like Zombies, Run!® or Pokemon GO® to make getting steps fun and exciting.
- Get a jump rope or hula hoop and channel your childhood.
- Find a place to go paintballing or play laser tag.
- Try out boxing or kickboxing classes. These activities can also help release excess energy or frustration.
- Go for a bike ride.

Think about your reasons to move

Think about your reasons for wanting to be more physically active. What will you gain? Common answers could be:

- I want to be healthier.
- I would like to take fewer medications.
- I want to be able to stop using a CPAP machine.
- I want to feel less pain in my joints.

Think about why it is important to you

Now think about why getting having more endurance, strength or mobility is important to you. What will being in better physical shape allow you to do or not do? Here are some ideas:

- I want to be able to walk around the grocery store instead of using the motorized cart.
- I want to be able to go on vacation to Florida and enjoy walking on the beach.
- I want to live as long as possible to see my children grow up. I know I need to be physically healthy and strong to do that.

Think about your barriers and what you CAN do

Now take a moment to think about why you are not regularly moving. Do you already have ideas about what exercise should look like? Are your reasons related to these things?

- I do not have time.
- I do not have the energy.
- I have pain.
- I do not feel safe in my neighborhood.
- I do not have the exercise equipment I need.

Try to think about each barrier honestly. Keeping your reasons for getting active in mind, ask what progress or option you can commit to. Here are some examples:

- “I know I do not have 30 minutes 3 times per week to get to the gym. I am already so strapped for time. But I do know that I can take the dog for a longer walk for 3 nights this week after dinner. I will track my steps and try to build 5% each week. This will help me reach my bigger goal of better endurance.”
- “It is not safe for me to walk or bike around my neighborhood after work. But I can go on YouTube and try out some online workouts in the evenings.”

- “I know that strength training is important for my health. I do not have money right now to join a gym or buy weights for home. But I can do body weight exercises like sit-ups, push-ups, planks and squats. I can set a goal for number of repetitions and try to add on 1 more every week.”

Make a plan

Make your plan for movement in advance. Prepare everything you need. Rehearse how it will go in your mind before you get started. This will increase the chance that you will reach your goal. Here are some examples:

- **Plan:** “Tomorrow, I am going to wake up 30 minutes early and take a walk before getting ready for the day.”
- **Prepare:** “I will set my alarm right now for 30 minutes earlier. I will set out my walking clothes and put them on my dresser. I will choose a playlist to listen to now and have my headphones out. I will walk one direction down the street for 15 minutes and turn around to walk home.”
- **Imagine:** While getting ready for bed, take a moment to close your eyes and imagine your alarm going off and even having the thought, “I do not want to get out of bed.” Imagine what you will do or say to yourself to get yourself up anyway. Then imagine putting on your walking clothes, getting out the door, starting your playlist, starting to walk and breathing in the fresh air. Imagine walking for 15 minutes and guess what landmarks you will see along the way. Imagine getting back home and getting ready for the day. Think about how you will feel both physically and emotionally.

Tips

Humans are social animals; think about the value of making plans for movement with friends or family. You can call a friend to join you for a walk to pass the time. Or make movement a family activity.

When you happen to miss a workout (we all do), start back up right away. Expect to get stuck in this process. Remember building these routines is less about whether you did or did not reach the goal in the way you had imagined. It is more about how you were able to adapt since your life is unpredictable.

Here are some more ideas to help you get moving.

During your day

- Take a walk.
- Go for a hike in a forest preserve or nature area.
- Go for a walk while you wait for your child at an activity practice.
- Deep clean your home.
- Park at the furthest end of the parking lot.

Work out

- Try out interval training or high-intensity interval training (HIIT).
- Try out personal training.
- Find a pool and go for a swim.

Sign up

- Join a run, walk or “Couch to 5K” program.
- Join a gym.
- Join a running club.
- Join a yoga class.
- Join a meet-up group in your area for walking or kayaking.

At work

- Commit to doing chair exercises.
- Have a walking meeting for work.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Try a standing desk.
- Set a timer to remind yourself to stand up once every hour during the day.

Online

- Try online workouts.
- Try ClassPass® so you can sample many different kinds of activities.
- Play active video games like Dance Dance Revolution®, Wii Fit® or a geocaching game.

When it comes to movement, for many people, our brains are our worst enemies. We can think of many reasons not to move. The key is to start and get moving before our brains can talk us out of it.

If you have any questions, please ask your physician.