

## Physical Activity

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Congratulations on your decision to increase your physical activity. You've already accomplished the most difficult task — deciding to do something to improve your fitness. Here are a few things to keep in mind as you begin your adventure.

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### Before You Start

If you answer yes to any of these questions, consult your doctor.

- Are you a man over 40 or a woman over 50?
- Have you been told that you have heart trouble?
- Do you experience chest pains?
- Do you often feel faint or dizzy?
- Do you have arthritis or other bone or joint problems that might be aggravated by improper exercise?
- Do you have high blood pressure?
- Do you have diabetes?
- Are you unaccustomed to vigorous exercise and planning to do more than moderate activity (walking or bicycling)?

### Getting Started

- Start your new routine gradually.
- Spend the first few minutes of your exercise routine warming up your muscles by doing some stretches.
- Start slowly and build up gradually to prevent minor muscle and joint soreness and stiffness.
- Drink water before, during, and after exercise to avoid dehydration.
- Let your doctor know that you plan to start a new fitness routine. He or she may have some special recommendations for you if you have health problems.

### Benefits:

- The most healthful benefits appear when people go from a sedentary lifestyle to moderate activity.
- Physical activity appears to relieve the symptoms of depression and anxiety and improve mood.
- Recommendations from experts agree that for better health, physical activity should be performed a minimum of 30 minutes most, if not all, days of the week.