



AMA Healthier Life Steps™

A Physician's Guide to Personal Health

Action plan for increasing physical activity

The goal

- Get moving!
- At least 2 ½ hours of moderate-intensity physical activity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity physical activity each week, preferably spread throughout the week
- Muscle-strengthening activities that involve all major muscle groups, two or more days per week

Studies show that if you engage in physical activity, you are more likely to counsel your patients to do so. This is true for most healthy habits.

Get ready

Studies reveal clear evidence that physical activity lowers risk of death from cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer. (See *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Physical Activity Guidelines*.) Physical activity may also reduce depression and improve sleep quality and cognitive function.

Know your barriers to physical activity and create strategies to overcome them.

- **Time:** Allot time for physical activity on your calendar. You don't have to do it all at once. You will benefit from breaking it down to as little as 10 minutes at a time.
- **Motivation:** Invite someone to exercise with you.
- **Inactivity:** It is never too late to see the benefits of becoming physically active. Every little bit counts no matter when you start.



Make a plan

I will plan to _____ 1, 3, 5, 7 days per week.

Take action

To begin your plan to become more active, check one or two of the following items or add your own activities in the spaces provided.

- Park at the far end of the lot
- Get on or off the bus several blocks from the clinic or home
- Take the stairs instead of the escalator
- Move around the clinic; find excuses not to sit down
- Take a 10-minute walk once a day
- Play actively with your kids or pets twice a week
- Wash your car by hand

My start date:

Track your physical activities on your **Increasing physical activity progress tracking calendar**, which is enclosed in this packet (or visit www.ama-assn.org/go/healthierlifesteps to download a copy).



Factors for success

- Share your goals and progress with a colleague, friend or life partner
- Share your goals and progress with your physician
- Use a pedometer

Useful resources

- **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans**
Includes the scientific rationale for the guidelines and resources for health professionals.
www.health.gov/paguidelines
- **American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM)**
ACSM's website links to the HHS federal guidelines, as well as ACSM's and the American Heart Association's recommendations on how to meet the federal guidelines.
www.acsm.org
- **American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR)**
www.aicr.org
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**
www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/professionals/index.html