

Fit Facts™

FROM THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EXERCISE®

EVERYTHING IN MODERATION

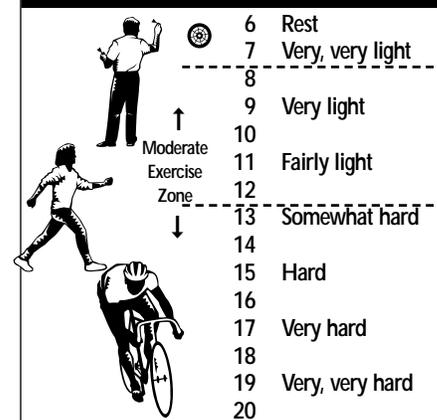
When it comes to exercise we each determine what we can or cannot do, and how hard we push ourselves. Some follow the all-or-nothing principle, believing that if exercise is good for you it has to be hard, even painful. Then along came last year's Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity, detailing the benefits of moderate physical activity. It was then that people began questioning exactly what "moderate activity" means.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO PUT OUT A LOT TO GAIN A LOT

This perceived exertion scale shows you how little exertion is required to benefit from regular physical activity. It is used by exercisers to rate their exertion during any type of fitness program.

Exercise rated in the 11 to 15 range is enough to improve cardiovascular condition. But even less than that — exertion rated in the 8 to 12 range, which is very light to moderate activity — can bring many health benefits.

PERCEIVED EXERTION SCALE



Examples Of Moderate Amounts Of Activity

- Washing and waxing a car for 45-60 minutes
- Washing windows or floors for 45-60 minutes
- Playing volleyball for 45 minutes
- Playing touch football for 30-45 minutes
- Gardening for 30-45 minutes
- Wheeling self in wheelchair for 30-40 minutes
- Walking 1½ miles in 35 minutes (20 min/mile)
- Basketball (shooting baskets) for 30 minutes
- Bicycling 5 miles in 30 minutes
- Dancing fast (social) for 30 minutes
- Pushing a stroller 1½ miles in 30 minutes
- Raking leaves for 30 minutes
- Walking 2 miles in 30 minutes (15 min/mile)
- Water aerobics for 30 minutes
- Swimming laps for 20 minutes
- Wheelchair basketball for 20 minutes
- Basketball (playing a game) for 15-20 minutes
- Bicycling 4 miles in 15 minutes
- Jumping rope for 15 minutes
- Running 1½ miles in 15 minutes (10 min/mile)
- Shoveling snow for 15 minutes
- Stairwalking for 15 minutes



Reprinted from the Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity and Health

LIMITLESS OPTIONS

There are few limitations on what types of activities you can do at a moderate intensity. The Surgeon General's Report includes a recommendation that everyone accumulate 30 minutes or more of physical activity on most or all days of the week. Brisk walking is the most popular choice since it can easily be incorporated into a busy day, has low injury rates, doesn't require special skills or equipment, and can be done by anyone at any age. But don't forget the things you do everyday. Gardening provides a multitude of opportunities for improving muscle strength, as does waxing the car or vacuuming the carpet.

One of the appealing aspects of this type of exercise program is that the amount of exercise you need to accumulate can be adapted according to the length of time, intensity or frequency with which you exercise. To see an

example of how activities measure up to one another in relation to time and intensity, see the box to the left.

THE ROAD AHEAD

Now that you know physical activity need not be overly strenuous to be beneficial, it's time to get started. To insure that you're able to stick with exercise, choose activities you enjoy that can easily become part of your routine. Begin slowly, giving the body time to adjust, and work up to the desired amount and intensity. If you have any chronic health problems, or are at risk for any (e.g., heart disease, diabetes, obesity), consult with your physician before starting any activity.

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