

State of Michigan Employees For Your Benefit

provides a variety of timely information related to your health care benefits and needs

Mini changes can result in many healthy years

You hear it constantly: exercise, exercise, exercise. And you know you should, but you think it takes too much time. You don't feel like it. Your knees hurt from just walking up the stairs. Excuses won't help you feel better; moving will. Getting started with an exercise plan may be easier if you're focused. Here are ways to get motivated.

Before you make any changes in your physical activity, check with your doctor to make sure you're making the proper changes. Work with your doctor to develop an activity plan that matches your abilities.

Set mini goals

Set realistic goals. Start small. Walk around the block. In a few weeks, add another block. Keep going, but listen to your body. When you feel tired, rest. Don't force yourself to do too much too soon. You may injure yourself or become frustrated and stop.

Make a plan

Decide what you need to do and how you plan to do it. Write it down and include the reasons why you're making this change — to lose weight, to feel better, to help with a current condition or to prevent disease.

Keep tabs

Keeping track of your progress can be a great motivator. Use a journal to record your successes and note when you've made progress. Did you increase your walking distance or pace? Are you losing weight? Do you feel better?

Enjoy the small steps

Make your journey to a healthier lifestyle fun. Celebrate each step. Did you walk a mile instead of a half mile? Did you drop a pound? Can you climb a flight of stairs without breathing heavily? These small accomplishments can eventually lead to big ones.

Celebrate each little victory

Get a pedicure. Take a bubble bath. Buy a new CD. Go dancing with your loved one. Your victories are unique and so, too, are your rewards. Remember, don't celebrate with a chunk of cake or a cigarette. Your celebrations should reinforce your new habits.

Make it your strategy to get healthier and improve your life.

Sources: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention





10 minutes at a time is fine

Ninety to 150 minutes of exercise a week may sound like a lot of time, but you don't have to do it all at once.

It's best to spread your activity out during the week. Even better, you can break up your exercise into chunks of 10 or more minutes during the day.

New guidelines make it easier to reach your exercise goals

Fitting regular exercise into your daily schedule may seem difficult at first. But according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, physical activity guidelines are more flexible than ever. The new guidelines give you the freedom to reach your physical activity goals through different types and amounts of activities each week.

Make sure you're getting enough activity to reap the benefits. Do both aerobic and strengthening activities to get a balanced workout. Each offers important health benefits.

Aerobic activities

Aerobic activities improve the health of your heart, lungs and circulatory system. They can help prevent or delay the onset of chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure and stroke. They can help boost your mood; and when combined with healthy eating, can promote weight loss.

Moderate versus vigorous activities

You can move a little or a lot. Start slowly if you haven't exercised in a while.

Too much, too soon? Take the "Talk Test" to monitor your physical activity intensity.

You should be able to talk during your activity, without gasping for breath. If talking becomes difficult, your activity may be too hard. Slow down until you're able to talk comfortably again.

Moderate activities	Vigorous activities
<p>Build up to 2 1/2 hours a week.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ballroom and line dancing • Biking on level ground or a few hills • Gardening (raking, trimming shrubs) • Sports where you catch and throw (baseball, softball, volleyball) • Tennis (doubles) • Walking briskly • Water aerobics 	<p>Build up to 1 1/2 hours a week.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aerobic dance; fast dancing • Biking faster than 10 miles per hour • Heavy gardening (digging, hoeing) • Sports with a lot of running (basketball, hockey, soccer) • Tennis (singles) • Race walking or running • Martial arts (such as karate) • Swimming fast or laps

Correction: The article "Healthy changes can stop diabetes before it starts" in the Spring edition of For Your Benefit contained an error regarding cholesterol levels and diabetes risk. The corrected information is below:

Cholesterol levels that are not within the ideal range increase the risk for diabetes. If your HDL ("good") cholesterol is less than 35 or your triglyceride level is higher than 250, you have a greater risk of developing diabetes.

Benefits of strength training activities

Strength training can reduce the signs and symptoms of numerous diseases and chronic conditions; among them:

- Arthritis
- Osteoporosis
- Back pain
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Depression

Try some of these strength-training activities:

Strength training activities		
Build up to 2 days a week		
Push-ups	Lunges	Lifting weights
Sit-ups	Squats	Working with resistance bands
Include all major muscle groups such as legs, hips, back, chest, stomach, shoulders and arms.		
Exercise each muscle group 8 to 12 times per session.		

Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
30 mins. brisk walking	30 mins. brisk walking	Resistance band exercises	30 mins. brisk walking	30 mins. brisk walking	Resistance band exercises	30 mins. brisk walking
Total:	150 minutes moderate-intensity aerobic activity					
	+2 days muscle-strengthening activity					

Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
30 mins. water aerobics	30 mins. jogging	30 mins. brisk walking	Yoga	30 mins. brisk walking	Yoga	
Total:	90 minutes moderate-intensity aerobic activity					
	30 minutes vigorous-intensity aerobic activity					
	2 days muscle strengthening					



Save money while you exercise

BCBSM members are eligible for special discounts and benefits through the Healthy Blue XtrasSM and Blue365[®] programs. These programs make it easier and less expensive to get the balanced lifestyle you deserve. Enjoy exclusive savings on healthy products and services from companies around the state and nationwide.

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