

EXERCISING

WHILE

LOSING WEIGHT



Regular physical activity—combined with a sensible diet—is the most effective way to not only lose weight, but keep it off over time. Exercise can help you burn calories, reduce body fat, and lower your risk of numerous diseases, including diabetes, heart disease, and some cancers. The key is to choose activities that you enjoy and that can help you meet your weight-loss goals.

Getting Started

- Talk with your health care provider about integrating regular exercise into your weight loss plan.
- Do moderate-intensity cardiovascular exercise for 20 to 60 minutes at least three to four days per week. Daily exercise, however, is recommended for weight loss.
- Choose low-impact activities, such as walking, swimming, cycling, and step aerobics. Group exercise in the water is can be especially effective.
- At least two days per week, follow a strength-training program with one to three sets of exercises for the major muscle groups, with 10 to 15 repetitions. While aerobic exercise burns more calories, strength training helps you preserve or even increase your lean muscle mass.
- Start slowly and gradually progress the intensity and duration of your workouts.
- Find an exercise partner to help keep you motivated and consistent about your workouts.
- Set realistic weight-loss goals—no more than one to two pounds per week—and stick to a healthy, calorie-controlled diet.

Exercise Cautions

- Being overweight can be hard on the joints. Choose activities that minimize your risk of injury—swimming and water exercise, for example, are great alternatives for those who find other forms of exercise uncomfortable.
- Weight loss requires commitment, so find ways to stay motivated. Consider enlisting the help of friends and family or creating a rewards system for meeting smaller weight-loss goals.
- Drink plenty of fluids before, during, and after exercise, and be careful not to overdo it as extra weight makes it easier for the body to overheat.

Your exercise program should be designed to maximize the benefits with the fewest risks of aggravating your health or physical condition. Consider contacting a certified health and fitness professional* who can work with you and your health care provider to establish realistic goals and design a safe and effective program that addresses your specific needs.

*If your health care provider has not cleared you for independent physical activity and would like you to be monitored in a hospital setting or a medical fitness facility, you should exercise only under the supervision of a certified professional. The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) has two groups of certified fitness professionals that could meet your needs. The ACSM Certified Clinical Exercise Specialist (CES) is certified to support those with heart disease, diabetes and lung disease. The ACSM Registered Clinical Exercise Physiologist (RCEP) is qualified to support patients with a wide range of health challenges. You may locate all ACSM-certified fitness professionals by using the ProFinder at www.acsm.org.

For more information, visit www.exerciseismedicine.org or e-mail eim@acsm.org.

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