



Overview

Be Active — It's Your Choice!

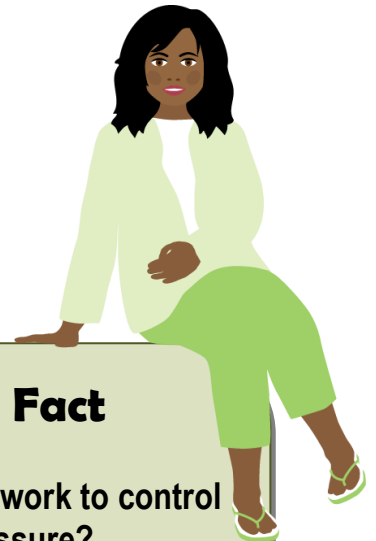
Becoming more physically active is a lifestyle choice. We have lots of choices in life, and each of us can choose a healthy lifestyle if we want to. However, we have busy lives, and changing is not simple.

Finding the Time

Time is something we never seem to have enough of. This handout will help you find time to be more physically active. If you struggle with finding the time, you may be surprised at the simple ways that you can include physical activity in your day.

Choosing an Active Lifestyle

Having an active lifestyle means making choices to move instead of to sit. For example, an active choice is to take the stairs instead of the elevator. An example of a not-so-active choice is to park your car as close to the entrance as you can. An active choice would be to park far away and walk to the entrance. These choices only take an extra minute or two, but they all make a difference and add up to a more active you.



Quick Fact

Why should I work to control my blood pressure?

By controlling our blood pressure, we can lower our risk for heart disease and stroke by one-third to one-half.

We can also lower our risk for eye, kidney, and nerve diseases by almost one-third.

Make it Work for You!

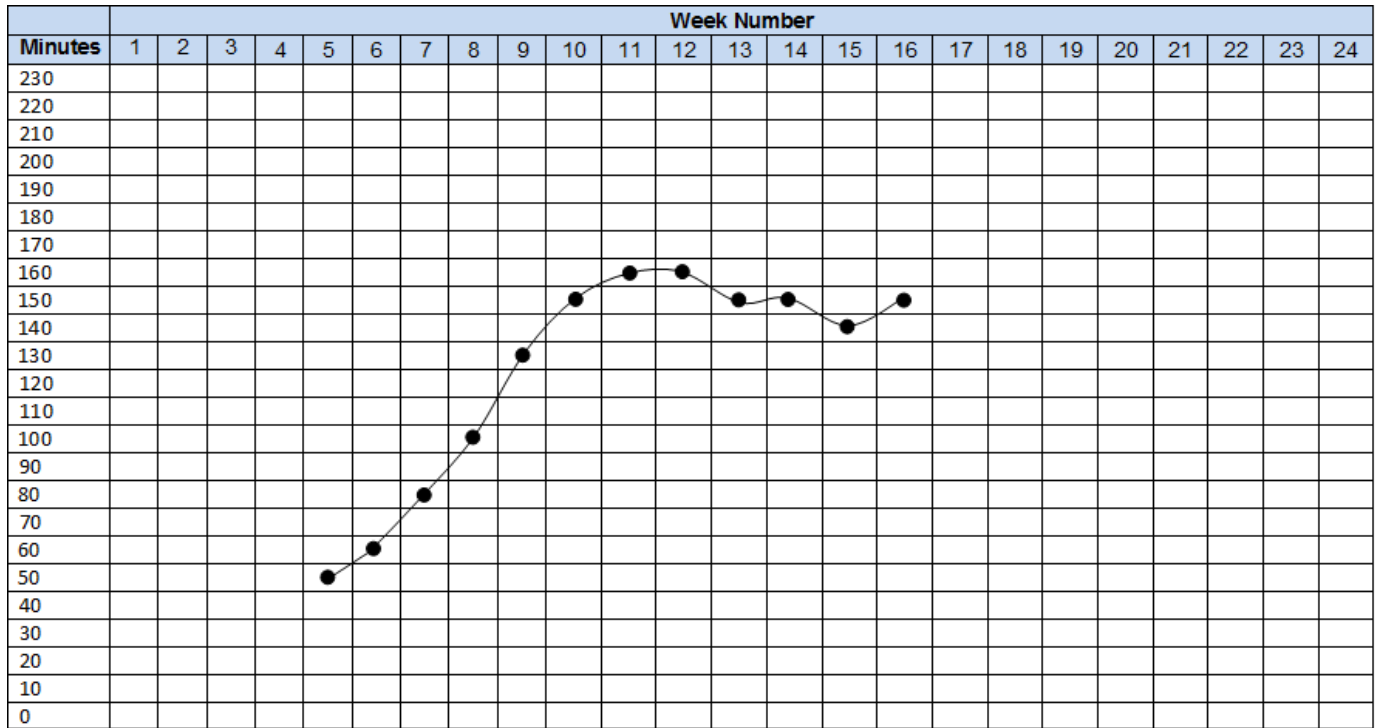
Being active doesn't have to mean trips to the gym or walking for a long time on a treadmill. You can be active anywhere. The place is not important. What is important is finding the time to be active and being active regularly throughout the day.

You'll be surprised at how easy it can be!



Sample How Am I Doing? Physical Activity

Name: Sandra Williams Start Date: 11-05-11 Min. Physical Activity Goal: 150 Minutes



Instructions

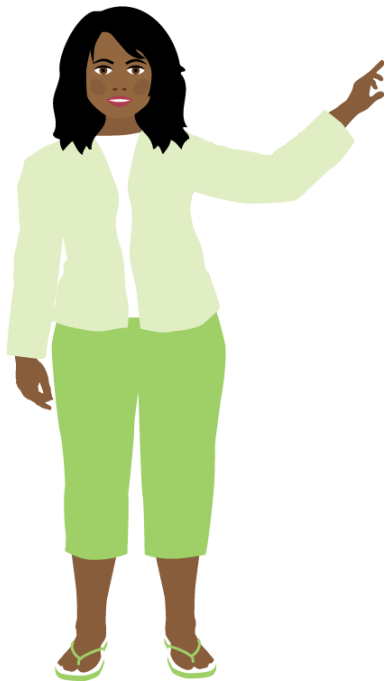
Each week, place a dot beside the total minutes you have been physically active for that week.



You Can Find the Time!

We all have busy lives. It seems we have little time for physical activity. But we can find the time. Here are tips on how to make time to be active.

1. Every day set aside one block of time to be active.



- Decide on a good time to set aside 20 to 30 minutes to do an activity you enjoy.
- If one block of time will not work, think about trying smaller blocks of time:
 - ✓ 10 minutes three times a day
 - ✓ 15 minutes twice a day
 - ✓ 10 minutes in the morning, 10 minutes in the afternoon, and another 10 minutes in the evening

2. Replace less active blocks of time with active ones.

- Walk for half an hour instead of watching an extra half hour of TV.
- Instead of reading a book seated, read while on an exercise bike.



Lifestyle Activity

This handout is about making active lifestyle choices. All through your day, choose active options instead of less active ones. Every minute adds up to a "**more active you.**"

Here are some other ideas for active choices. Write in some of your own!



Active Choice
Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
Walk to the mailbox or a neighbor's house instead of driving.
Do some activity while watching TV. For example, ride an exercise bike or lift weights.
Walk around the outside of a store before going in.
Get off the bus a stop or two early and walk the rest of the way.
Do not use the remote to change channels, walk to the TV and change it manually



Keep it Safe

Being active is usually safe, but sometimes problems can come up. The best way to avoid problems is to prevent them. Here are some ways to prevent common minor injuries.

Prevent sore muscles or cramps

- ✓ Increase only **a little at a time** how often, how intensely, and how long you are active.
- ✓ Drink plenty of fluids (especially water) before, during, and after being active.
- ✓ Warm-up before every activity, and cool-down afterwards.

Warming up and cooling down should take only 5 to 10 minutes.

Do your planned activity, but more slowly or at a lower intensity, for 5 to 10 minutes.

Do a few minutes of gentle stretching.

If you do get a muscle cramp, treat it this way:

- ✓ Stretch the muscle, and then massage it. Repeat until the cramp goes away.
- ✓ If you still have pain, put **ice** on the pain for a few minutes. Then repeat the stretching and massaging.



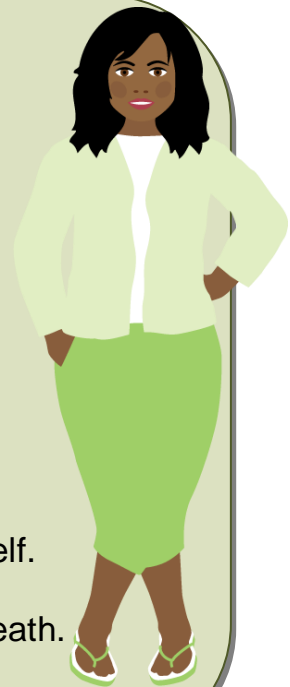
Keep it Safe (continued)

☐ Stretch those muscles!

- ✓ Stretching is one of the best ways to keep muscles from becoming sore, cramped, or injured.
- ✓ Stretching also helps you be more flexible and feel relaxed.

How to Stretch

1. Do a short warm-up *before* stretching.
2. Move slowly until you feel the muscle stretch. A safe stretch is gentle and relaxing.
3. Hold the stretch steady for 15 to 30 seconds. Do **not** bounce.
4. Relax. Then repeat 3 to 5 times.
5. Stretch within your own limits. Do not push yourself.
6. Breathe slowly and naturally. Do not hold your breath.



Important!



Never stretch if you have pain before you begin. If a stretch causes pain, stop doing it. *Listen to your body!*



Safe and Easy Stretches

Here are some safe and easy stretches.

Arm Reaches

1. Stand up straight with your feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Counting to 5, stretch your right arm to the ceiling while keeping your feet flat on the floor.
3. Repeat with your left arm.
4. Do this 10 times. Then shake out your arms.



Arm Circles

1. Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, knees slightly bent.
2. Extend your arms straight out from the shoulders with your fingers spread and palms down. Keep your buttocks and stomach tight.
3. Rotate your arms in circles 10 times forward and then 10 times backward. Then shake out your arms.
4. Over time, work up to 20 circles in each direction.



Waist Bends

1. Stand up tall with your feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Bend to the right, bringing your right arm down the side of your body and left arm over your head. Look straight ahead and count to ten. Slowly return to the straight-up position.
3. Repeat the exercise, bending to the left side.
4. Over time, work up to 5 of these.





Safe and Easy Stretches (continued)

❑ Sitting Toe Touch

1. Sit on the floor with your feet placed flat against a wall, knees slightly bent. Reach out your hands and slowly stretch them toward your toes. Keep breathing.
2. Repeat 2 or 3 times to start.
3. Over time, work your way up to 10 of these.



❑ Back Press

1. Lie on your back with your knees bent and your hands clasped behind your neck. Keep your feet flat on the floor. Take a deep breath and relax.
2. Press the small of your back against the floor and tighten your stomach and buttock muscles. This should cause the lower end of the pelvis to rotate forward and flatten your back against the floor.
3. Hold for 5 seconds. Relax.

❑ Back Stretch

1. Lie on your back with your knees bent and your arms flat on the floor at your sides. Keep your feet flat on the floor. Take a deep breath and relax.
2. Grasp the back of one knee (not the top of the knee) with both hands and pull as close to your chest as possible. Return to the starting position.
3. Repeat with the other leg.





Safe and Easy Stretches (continued)

☐ Heel Cord (Achilles) Stretch

1. Stand facing a wall an arm's distance away, with your knees straight and your heels flat on the floor.
2. With your hands resting on the wall, allow your body to lean forward by bending your elbows slowly. Keep your legs and body straight and your heels on the floor.



☐ Calf Stretch

1. Stand straight with feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Step forward with your right foot, slightly bending your right knee. The front of your knee should be lined up with the front of your toes. Your left leg should stay fairly straight and your left heel should remain on the floor. Hold for 10-20 seconds.
3. Slightly bend your left knee. Hold for 10-20 seconds.
4. Repeat for the other side.



All photos and images for the stretching exercises are reproduced with the written consent of the University of Pittsburgh, Physical Activity Resource Center for Public Health www.parcph.org.



Treating an Injury

With proper stretching, and the right amount and type of activity for you, injuries should not be a problem. However, if you are injured while exercising, follow these tips.

If you get a sprain, strain, “pull” or bruise, remember
R.I.C.E. (rest, ice, compression, elevation)

R.I.C.E.	What to do
R est	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Stop doing the activity. ✓ Rest for a few days. This will stop some bruising and help with healing. ✓ Apply splints, tapes, or bandages if they are needed.
I ce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Wrap ice or cold compresses in an absorbent towel or cloth, and apply to the injured area. Ice reduces pain, bruising, and swelling. ✓ Hold the ice in place for 10 minutes. Then take it off for 10 minutes. ✓ Repeat the ice-on and ice-off schedule as often as you can during the first 24 to 36 hours after you're injured. <p>IMPORTANT: Make sure to wrap the ice or cold compresses in an absorbent towel or cloth before you apply them to the injured area. Unwrapped ice or ice wrapped only in plastic can cause frostbite and more injury.</p>
C ompression (Pressure)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Apply pressure by wrapping the injury with an elastic bandage. The bandage helps to reduce swelling and blood flow to the injured area. ✓ The bandage should be tight enough to reduce blood flow but not cut it off completely. Loosen the bandage if your toes or fingers begin to feel numb or lose their color.
E levation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Lift the injured area above your heart. Keep it elevated whenever possible, not just when it has ice on it. ✓ This technique helps reduce internal bleeding and stop pain and throbbing in the injured area.



Call your doctor —

- If the injury is serious.
- If you're not sure whether the injury is serious.
- If you cannot move the injured area, or there is sudden, severe swelling. These may be signs of a broken bone.



When to Stop Exercising

Being active is usually safe, but you should be aware of some signs and symptoms that mean you should stop exercising.

Chest pain or discomfort

✓ What is it?

Tight feeling of pressure, pain, squeezing, or heaviness in the chest

✓ Where in the chest?

The pain could be –

- ✓ In the center of the chest
- ✓ Spread throughout the front of the chest
- ✓ Radiating to the shoulders, arms, neck, or back

✓ What should I do?

Stop exercising. Sit or lie down.

- ✓ If the pain *does not* go away after 2 to 4 minutes, go to a hospital emergency room.
- ✓ If the pain *goes away* but returns each time you exercise, see your doctor.



Severe nausea, shortness of breath, sweating, or feeling faint

What should I do?

Call your doctor!

These symptoms may indicate something serious. However, sweating alone is not usually a concern. Severe sweating *plus* other symptoms should not be ignored.