



Be Weight Wise: Be active



REGULAR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY has a wealth of benefits, but today most of us tend to be quite inactive. We live in a 'push-button culture' full of labour-saving devices. Computers, video games, cars, escalators and automatic doors all result in our being increasingly inactive. Regular physical activity can improve your overall health and help prevent disease. Combined with healthy eating habits, regular physical activity is a great way to help you to lose or control your weight.

won't do it. Or you'll start and then give up. You may enjoy team or group sports such as football or aerobics, or you may prefer individual activities such as swimming or walking. If you are a morning person then choose to do things in the morning when you have more energy.

There are basically two types of exercise: **cardiovascular** (aerobic) and **resistance** (weight) training.

Cardiovascular training includes anything that works your heart and lungs hard, such as brisk walking, jogging, swimming and cycling.

Resistance training includes the use of weights and machines. In an aquarobics class, the water acts as resistance and so this form of exercise could be a good one to choose as an alternative to training in a gym.

Why get active?

Being active helps you:

- Lose weight
- Maintain your weight loss
- Live longer, more healthily
- Keep your bones, muscles and joints healthy
- Improve your mood and reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression



Exercise also reduces your risk of:

- Dying from coronary heart disease
- Developing diabetes, colon cancer and high blood pressure

What activity should I do?

Anything you enjoy at a time you enjoy doing it. After all, if you don't enjoy it you probably

How often and how much activity should I do?

Be as active as possible as often as you can. Any amount of physical activity is better than none at all, and if you're already active your health will benefit from doing more. As a guide, try to do **30 minutes (or more) of moderate-intensity physical activity** e.g. walking, swimming, housework or gardening **every day**.



**"But I never lose weight,
however hard I try..."**

Even so, eating healthily and taking regular exercise will still benefit you!



Do you make any of the following excuses?

- 'I don't have time' – exercise doesn't have to be time-consuming. Just ten minutes every day can lead to health benefits.
- 'I'm too old' – anyone can get active at any age.
- 'It's expensive' – not necessarily. You don't have to join a gym and you don't have to invest in expensive equipment.
- 'It's boring' – then find something that you enjoy. Dancing round when you're vacuuming can be just as beneficial as working out.
- 'It's dangerous' – it's certainly more dangerous if you *don't* exercise. But if you're worried, check with your GP first! (See *Safety tips*)

Top tips to get more active

- Clean the house with vigour
- Get up to change the TV channel
- Wash your car by hand
- Climb the stairs briskly
- Mow the lawn & rake the leaves
- Use the stairs, not the lift or escalator
- Go for a brisk walk

Vary your activities and remember to **stretch** and **strengthen**.

Variety is the spice of life – try different activities to stop yourself getting bored. Stretching and weight training should also be part of your regular exercise routine to help strengthen your bones and muscles, help to prevent injury, and use extra calories.

Find an exercise buddy

It's much more fun if you do things with friends and family. Go for a walk with a friend, play in the park with the kids, arrange to meet someone for a swim.

Safety tips

- Check with your doctor before you start exercising if you:
 - have ever been told you have heart problems or high blood pressure
 - have bone or joint problems that may be aggravated by exercise
 - are over the age of 65 and inactive
 - are on prescription medication
 - think that you may have any other reason for not exercising
- Dress appropriately – whether you are walking the dog or going to the gym, wear comfortable clothes.
- Invest in appropriate footwear e.g. trainers for walking and jogging.
- Start gradually and exercise at a comfortable pace.
- Always carry a drink with you.

If you are trying to lose weight, aim to lose no more than one to two pounds (half to one kg) each week.

