

Wellness News



Tips to stay healthy throughout the year
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Spring Into Health

April is Physical Wellness Month

Regular physical activity can help achieve a healthy weight and reduce the risk of numerous health conditions. It can also help reduce stress, improve & stabilize mood, improve sleep & self-esteem. We consistently hear that physical activity is important but what counts as physical activity?

All Movement Matters

Physical Activity vs. Exercise

It is a common belief that physical activity and exercise are interchangeable, but that is not necessarily the case. The American Council on Exercise defines each as,

- **“Physical Activity** is movement that is carried out by the skeletal muscles that requires energy. In other words, any movement one does is actually physical activity.”
- **“Exercise**, however, is planned, structured, repetitive and intentional movement intended to improve or maintain physical fitness. Exercise is a subcategory of physical activity.”

While both are equally important, it is clinically proven that “ALL physical activity positively contributes to overall health and well-being.” (acefitness.org).

Benefits of Being Physically Active

Whether you follow a planned exercise regimen or practice more spontaneous physical activity, there are several benefits to maintaining a regularly active lifestyle.

- **Improve Mood** – Physical Activity releases endorphins, which can be known as ‘feel good chemicals’ in our brain that can improve mood & overall outlook - leaving you feeling much better after a bout of activity.
- **Increase Energy** – regular activity helps train your body to delivery oxygen & nutrients to your muscles & organs more efficiently. This can leave you feeling more energized, not just after a workout but throughout your day.
- **Reduce risk of chronic conditions** – Exercise can help reduce one’s risk of developing several types of chronic conditions. See page 2 for more details.
- **Help with weight management** – Maintaining a physically active lifestyle can help prevent weight gain and/or help with weight loss.

Reducing Health Risks

There are some health risk factors that are out of our control, such as age, sex and family history. However, exercise is one way to help combat those risk factors and help reduce the risk of developing chronic conditions, including:

- High Blood Pressure
- Metabolic Syndrome
- Type 2 Diabetes
- Many types of cancer
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Arthritis

A regular exercise routine can even help manage many of these conditions and health concerns, if diagnosed.

How Should I Start?

First and foremost, before beginning any new exercise plan, talk with your doctor to make sure it is the right fit & approach for you.

Secondly, start slow. Begin with low impact activities and a duration that you are comfortable with and build from there. By starting slow, you will reap the health benefits and reduce your risk of injury. As strength and endurance builds, begin to add more time and more movements to the routine that will continue to push and challenge you.

Finally, make it fun! Choose an activity that you genuinely enjoy, this can be the key to a long lasting physically active lifestyle. Exercise does not have to be a certain amount of time spent in the gym, it can be anything that moves your body and makes you feel good.

Fitting in Fitness

The Center of Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) recommends 150 minutes of moderate activity per week for adults. However, it is just as effective to complete it in 15-minute segments as it is hour long exercise sessions. You can work activity into your schedule however is best for you, for example:

- Take a morning or midday walk
- Take the stairs a few more times than necessary throughout the day
- Walk around the office while on calls
- Do squats while watching TV

Make it Social!

Find someone in your friend group, at work, or in your family who also enjoys the same activities! Check in with them regularly, schedule times to meet up (virtually or safely in person) and set goals together to stay motivated. Practice your favorite activities together and even try something new!

CareFirst Member Resources

-  **RealAge® test:** In just a few minutes, the RealAge online health assessment will help you determine the physical age of your body, compared to your calendar age.
-  **Personalized timeline:** Receive content based on your health and well-being goals, along with your motivation and interests.
-  **Trackers:** Connect your wearable devices or enter your own data to monitor daily habits like stress, sleep, steps, nutrition and more.
-  **Challenges:** Stay motivated to achieve your health goals by joining a challenge.
-  **Health Profile:** Access your health data like biometric and lab results, vaccine information and medications, all in one place.

- [Sharecare Home Page](#) – Customize your home page to include tips on exercise and physical Activity. You'll begin to receive helpful tips & resources right on your home page.
- [Workout from Home](#) - Within the COVID-19 Care Center in your Sharecare account, you can find a 12-week exercise program to help you workout directly from home.
- [One-on-One Health Coaching](#) – Confidential support to help improve your overall well-being that can help you achieve the best possible health. Call 877-260-3253 and press option 7 to enroll.
- [Blue365](#) – Register for our Wellness Discount Program at carefirst.com/wellnessdiscounts.