



The Heart Truth® Discussion Guide #5 Physical Activity

Each person is unique. For this reason, the same routine of physical activity will not work for everyone. When planning your activity routine, keep in mind your current level of physical fitness, your schedule, and your interests. These will help determine the best physical activities for you.

Intensity

You can monitor the intensity of your exercise with a “conversational pace.” If you can sing during your activity, it’s not intense enough. If you become out of breath quickly and can’t speak during the activity because you don’t have enough air, your exercise is probably too intense. Aim for a pace where you can still talk but don’t have enough extra air to sing.

Schedule

Two and a half hours of physical activity per week is recommended for a healthy heart. This is usually broken down to 30 minute, 5 days a week. If you don’t have the endurance or time in your schedule for 30 minutes of activity at a time, break your exercise into 3 10-minute segments. Adding strength training to your activity routine two times a week can also help enhance your fitness.

Variety of Activities

If your physical activity plan is going to be a success, you need to find activities that interest you. There is no one right way to exercise. You can get physical activity in at home by vacuuming, gardening, or mowing the lawn while walking behind the mower. Go for a brisk walk with your family or neighbor. Join a community softball league. Attend a class at a fitness center or the YMCA. Go for a swim. Find what you like and stick with it!

Discussion Questions and Activities:

- When can you find 10-30 minutes in your schedule for physical activity?
- What physical activity would you most like to do? Is there any special equipment needed for that activity?
- Are there any barriers to you becoming more physically active? What can you do about those barriers?

Adapted by Catherine Becker, Community Health Intern, UW-Extension, June 2011 from:

The Heart Truth® for Women: A Speaker’s Guide. *The Heart Truth®*, National Heart Lung and Blood Institute, National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Revised December 2007. Information available at www.hearttruth.gov.

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American Heart Association, 2011. Information available at www.heart.org.

United States Department of Agriculture, 2011. Information available at www.choosemyplate.gov.

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Finding Resources in Your Community

Many communities have programs or locations in place to help their residents become physically active. If you are searching for an activity to join, consider looking in the following places:



1. Local YMCA
2. County, City, or Community Recreation Department
3. Local Community Center
4. Local Senior Center or Senior Housing Complex
5. Fitness center/gym
6. Community Pool
7. Worksite wellness programs
8. County or community walking trails or park facilities
9. Organize a neighborhood walking or exercise group—it's always more fun to be active with friends or neighbors
10. Independent physical exercise educators—watch the news paper or community flyers for classes

