

How teens can stay fit

What can I do to get more fit?

Any type of regular, physical activity can improve your fitness and your health. The most important thing is that you keep moving!

Exercise should be a regular part of your day, like brushing your teeth, eating, and sleeping. It can be in gym class, joining a sports team, or working out on your own. Keep the following tips in mind:

- Stay positive and have fun. A good mental attitude is important. Find an activity that you think is fun. You are more likely to keep with it if you choose something you like. A lot of people find it's more fun to exercise with someone else, so see if you can find a friend or family member to be active with you.
- Take it one step at a time. Small changes can add up to better fitness. For example, walk or ride your bike to school or to a friend's house instead of getting a ride. Get on or off the bus several blocks away and walk the rest of the way. Use the stairs instead of taking the elevator or escalator.
- Get your heart pumping. Whatever you choose, make sure it includes aerobic activity that makes you breathe harder and increases your heart rate. This is the best type of exercise because it increases your fitness level and makes your heart and lungs work better. It also burns off body fat. Examples of aerobic activities are basketball, running, or swimming.
- Don't forget to warm up with some easy exercises or mild stretching before you do any physical activity. This warms your muscles up and may help protect against injury. Stretching makes your muscles and joints more flexible too. It is also important to stretch out after you exercise to cool down your muscles.

Your goal should be to do some type of exercise every day. It is best to do some kind of aerobic activity without stopping for at least 20 to 30 minutes each time. Do the activity as often as possible, but don't exercise to the point of pain.

A Healthy Lifestyle

In addition to exercise, making just a few other changes in your life can help keep you healthy, such as

- Watch less TV or spend less time playing computer or video games. (Use this time to exercise instead!) Or exercise while watching TV (for example, sit on the floor and do sit-ups and stretches; use hand weights; or use a stationary bike, treadmill, or stair climber).
- Eat 3 healthy meals a day, including at least 4 servings of fruits, 5 servings of vegetables, and 4 servings of dairy products.
- Make sure you drink plenty of fluids before, during, and after any exercise (water is best but flavoured sports drinks can be used if they do not contain a lot of sugar). This will help replace what you lose when you sweat.
- Stop drinking or drink fewer regular soft drinks.

- Eat less junk food and fast food. (They're often full of fat, cholesterol, salt, and sugar.)
- Get 9 to 10 hours of sleep every night.
- Don't smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, or do drugs