

Being Active as a Teen

ACSM
EXERCISE IS
MEDICINE®

Your teen years are a time to discover who you are and who you want to become. That includes learning to feel joy and energy and confidence in your body. Make friends and express YOU through dance, sports and outdoor activities such as skateboarding or hiking.

Did you know that immediately after physical activity you can focus better, think more quickly and be a better problem solver? Being active also helps you sleep better, feel happier, build stronger bones and stay at a healthy weight. Health experts make the following recommendations for teens.



Getting Started

Start Simple

Sit less and move around more! Walk the dog. Dance in your room. Walk or bike to school. Take the stairs. Find opportunities to move throughout your day.

Do SIXTY

Do 60 total minutes of activity every day. This includes activities for your heart, muscles and bones. Exercise should be vigorous on three days of the week. Fit in 5 or 10 minutes when you can. Or go for 30-45 minutes. It's all good!

Find What's Fun

If you love it, you'll do it! Are you interested in soccer? Dance? Shooting hoops? Weight-lifting? Neighborhood rec center? Get a friend to be active with you. You'll be more likely to stick with it.

Less Screen Time

Spend no more than 2 hours sitting in front of the TV or computer at home each day. Seriously. After you're done with homework, take an active break.

Teen Tips for Physical Activity

Variety is more fun and prevents physical and mental burnout. Try a mix of individual and team activities.

During your growth years your bones may grow faster than your muscles. Stretch your calves, front hip and back of your thighs. Hold 30 seconds to a point of tightness.

Use the right equipment to do your activity safely, for example, supportive running shoes, bike helmets, face guards, etc.

Teenagers need 8-10 hours of sleep each night! Avoid screen time at least 1 hour before bed and keep your room dark, quiet and cool. You'll perform better all day.

Aerobic Activity

Aerobic activity increases your heart rate and breathing and will improve your stamina. Find fun ways to do moderate-intensity activity (like a brisk walk, biking, active video games) or vigorous activity (like soccer, basketball, running, hip hop dancing, karate).

What?

Any rhythmic, continuous activity

How often?

Every day (vigorous activity on at least 3 of those days)

How hard?

Fairly light to somewhat hard (if you can, very hard!)

How much?

As part of 60 minutes of daily activity

Remember: Be active however and wherever you can. To lose weight, do twice as much activity. Don't forget to warm up and cool down. Gradually increase your pace and time.

Muscle Strengthening

Exercises that challenge your muscles include weight-lifting using hand weights, resistance bands, weight machines or your own body (for example, push-ups, chair squats, planks). You can also get stronger through activities like climbing, wrestling, yoga and games like tug of war. Why not be healthier and stronger for everything you want to do?

What?

Strength training or muscle-challenging activities

How often?

3 or more days/week
*Rest day in between

How hard?

Start with light effort. Build up to medium or hard effort.

How much?

8-15 repetitions using good form

Remember: Get help from a certified athletic trainer, strength coach, or exercise professional. They can teach you the right way to do exercises and how to breathe properly.

Bone Building

Do activities (below) that challenge your bones at least 3 days/week. Bone is most sensitive to loading during this time in your life. NOW is your opportunity to build strong bones to protect you from developing osteoporosis later.

Weight-bearing activity (you're on your feet) like running, tennis, jump rope

Jumping and hopping

Using fast movements and changing direction like soccer, basketball, dance

Muscle strengthening exercises

How will I get started **this week?** _____

Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can.