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Hitting Your Exercise Targets



Consistent exercise is one of the best ways to lose or maintain your weight. To help you exercise safely and achieve reasonable goals, it's important to familiarize yourself with your ideal body weight as well as your target heart rate. *(Ref. 8 p. 1)*

More than 60% of American adults do not get the recommended amount of physical activity. Are you one of them?

If so, it is not entirely your fault. Conveniences of all sorts have replaced the need for us to move our bodies.

Many of us sit most of the day if we work in an office. We sit on our way to the office-in a car, train, or bus. We even sit during much of our leisure time-in front of the television set, at sporting events, and at the movies. We ride escalators, take elevators, and use remote controls. Without regular physical activity, our bodies can lose muscle fiber at a rate of 3 to 5 percent every decade after age 30. That's 30 percent muscle fiber loss by age 60. *(Ref. 16 p. 1)*

So get out there and exercise-although this can be easier said than done. Today, we must plan and schedule physical activity into our lives to get the exercise we need: 30 minutes or more a day, as many days of the week as possible. *(Ref. 14 p. 1)*

Some numbers to keep in mind when setting up an exercise program and steadily increasing its intensity are your ideal body weight and target heart rate. This article explains how to determine these figures, and provides some tips on sticking with your exercise program. Be sure to talk to your doctor about an exercise program that's right for you.

Maintaining Your Ideal Weight

Exercise is one of the best ways to lose or maintain your weight, although it doesn't replace eating right. Combined with proper nutrition, exercise can help you control your weight and avoid obesity, which is a

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risk factor for many diseases. (Ref. 8 p. 1)

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute has created three key measures to assess weight: (Ref. 3 p. 3)

- Body Mass Index (describes your weight relative to your height). Please go to the TOOLS section of the [Pfizer for Living Web site](#) to calculate your BMI.
- Waist circumference. Determine your waist circumference by placing a tape measure snugly around your waist. It is a good indicator of your abdominal fat, which is another predictor of developing risk factors for heart disease and other conditions. This risk increases with a waist measurement of over 40 inches in men and over 35 inches in women.
- Risk factors for diseases and conditions associated with obesity. People who are overweight have a greater chance of developing high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol or other lipid disorders, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and certain cancers.

Target Heart Rates for Optimum Results

Target heart rates are effective in measuring initial fitness levels and monitoring progress after you begin an exercise program. This approach requires measuring your pulse periodically as you exercise and staying within 50 to 75 percent of your maximum heart rate. The following are target and average rates according to your age: (Ref. 7 p. 1, 2)

<u>Age</u>	<u>Target HR Zone</u>	
	<u>(50 - 75%)</u>	<u>Average Maximum Heart Rate 100%</u>
50 years	85 - 127 beats per minute	170
55	83 - 123 beats per minute	165
60	80 - 120 beats per minute	160
65	78 - 116 beats per minute	155
70	75 - 113 beats per minute	150

Your maximum heart rate is approximately 220 minus your age. The figures above are averages and should be used as general guidelines. Some high blood pressure medications lower the maximum heart rate and thus target zone rate. If you are taking blood pressure medicine, call your doctor for advice. (Ref. 7 p. 2)

If you are unable to measure your pulse or do not want to take your pulse when exercising, you can use a "conversational pace" to monitor your efforts if you are doing moderate activities like walking. (Ref. 7 p. 1)

- If you can talk and walk at the same time, you are not working hard enough.
- If you can sing and maintain your level of effort, you are probably not working hard enough.
- If you get out of breath quickly, you are probably working too hard especially if you actually have to stop and catch your breath.

Sticking With It *(Ref. 17 p. 7)*

After you congratulate yourself for establishing an exercise routine, you must stick to it! One of the problems, as evidenced by health clubs throughout the country, is that people are enthusiastic in the beginning, yet have a hard time staying with their fitness routine over time. Many people join health clubs but for whatever reason still don't work out regularly. With all good intentions, and usually after New Year's resolutions or at the dawn of spring, many memberships are filled out. Unfortunately, the health club is the only one that benefits if you don't continue.

Some suggestions for staying with your routine:

- Vary your workouts and include activities that you enjoy to avoid boredom. *(Ref. 2 p. 1)*
- Listen to music to keep you interested. *(Ref. 2 p. 1)*
- Find a good time and place to work out. *(Ref. 2 p. 1)*
- Find a friend with whom to exercise. *(Ref. 2 p. 1)*
- Don't overdo it. This could make you more prone to injury. *(Ref. 2 p. 1)*
- Slowly increase the duration and intensity of your activities as you become more fit. If you do too much too soon, you may get frustrated and want to quit. *(Ref. 2 p. 1)*
- Keep track of your exercise routine and congratulate yourself when you have reached your goals. *(Ref. 17 p. 7)*

Tip

Choose activities that are fun, not exhausting. *(Ref. 2 p. 1)*

Bibliography

The links to sites outside of Pfizer are provided as a resource to the viewer.

Pfizer accepts no responsibility for the content of linked sites.

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14. American Medical Association Website: General Health Fitness
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