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National Exercise Guidelines Now Say 'Just Move'

— HHS recs say to sit less, move more to improve health outcomes

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CHICAGO -- Any physical activity will help, more is better, and it helps for a wider range of health outcomes than previously noted, according to new U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) guidelines.

Adults remain advised to do 150 to 300 minutes of moderate exercise or 75 to 150 minutes of vigorous exercise each week along with muscle and strength training twice per week to achieve the most benefits, the same as in the first guideline released in 2008.

However, the second edition released here at the American Heart Association meeting and online in [JAMA](#) removed the statement that only 10-minute bouts of physical activity counted toward meeting the guidelines and now say moving more frequently throughout the day helps toward meeting the recommendations.

"It's actually easier to achieve the recommendations in the physical activity guidelines," said Adm. Brett P. Giroir, MD, assistant secretary for health at HHS.

The recommendations added a target of 3 hours of physical activity per day for children ages 3 through 5 years. As before, children and adolescents ages 6 to 17 years should engage in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity for at least 60 minutes per day, reported Richard Troiano, PhD, of the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, Maryland, and colleagues in the *JAMA* paper.

The American Heart Association said it will adopt the guidelines as its official recommendations.

The most important message from those new guidelines "is that the greatest health benefits accrue by moving from no, to even small amounts of, physical activity, especially if that activity is of moderate (e.g., brisk walking) or vigorous (e.g., jogging and running) intensity," wrote Paul Thompson, MD, of Hartford Hospital in Connecticut and Thijs Eijssvogels, PhD, of Radboud University Medical Center in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, in an [accompanying editorial](#).

The update added the following to the list of long-term health benefits:

- Reduced risk of excessive weight gain for all groups
- Improved cognition for youth

- Reduced risk of bladder, endometrial, esophageal, kidney, stomach, and lung cancers
- Reduced risk of dementia, including Alzheimer's disease
- Lower risk of falls and injurious falls for older adults
- Reduced risk of postpartum depression

"The guidelines are right on, but the key is implementation," commented Carl "Chip" J Lavie, MD, medical director of cardiac rehabilitation and preventive cardiology at the Ochsner Heart and Vascular Institute in New Orleans.

The advisory committee developed the physical activity guidelines based on the results of a systematic review assessing the science behind physical activity and health. Taking into account the consistency and quality of the data, the investigators addressed 38 questions and 104 subquestions. The HHS guidelines were based off of findings that were considered strong or moderate.

The researchers also suggested that older adults do physical activity that consists of balance training, aerobic activity, and strengthening training. Women are advised to do 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity each week during and after pregnancy.

In closing, the investigators emphasized, "Health professionals and policy makers should facilitate awareness of the guidelines and promote the health benefits of physical activity and support efforts to implement programs, practices, and policies to facilitate increased physical activity and to improve the health of the U.S. population."

Piercy, Thompson, and Eijsvogels did not report any disclosures.

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Primary Source

JAMA

Source Reference: [Piercy K, et al "The physical activity guidelines for americans" JAMA 2018; DOI: 10.1001/jama.2018.14854.](#)

Secondary Source

JAMA

Source Reference: [Thompson, P et al "New physical activity guidelines: a call to activity for clinicians and patients" JAMA 2018; DOI: 10.1001/jama.2018.14854.](#)

