



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IS IMPORTANT FOR PEOPLE OF ALL AGES

Consuming a healthy diet certainly is one way to maintain your health. However, being physically active is just as important.

Being physically active not only fosters normal growth and development, it also makes people feel better, function better, sleep better and reduces the risk of many chronic diseases such as high blood pressure, some cancers and type 2 diabetes, said Diana Romano, Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension assistant specialist.

“Being physically active is vital for overall health. It’s recommended adults get at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity per week and at least two days per week of muscle-strengthening activities,” Romano said. “Children ages 6 to 17 should aim for 60 minutes per day of moderate aerobic, muscle-strengthening activities at least three days per week, as well as bone-strengthening activities three days per week. In addition, preschool-aged children should be physically active throughout the day to enhance growth and development.”

With hectic schedules, it can be easy to say there is not enough time to get in that much exercise. However, health benefits start immediately after exercising and even short episodes of physical activities are beneficial.

The population today is much more sedentary than it was even a generation ago. With hundreds of channels from which to choose, watching television has replaced a lot of physical activity. More people have jobs at which they sit at a desk for eight hours a day. Riding lawn mowers have replaced the push mower. Children are more likely to sit indoors and play video games rather than be outside riding bikes and playing with their friends.

Romano said it is important to focus on the benefits of exercise.

“It’s not like people haven’t heard about the long-term benefits of physical activity. This information isn’t new,” she said. “However, it isn’t always easy for people to change their behavior and fitting in physical activity can be a struggle for all of us. But it’s important to keep in mind exercise can improve mood, focus and sleep. It also helps you feel more energized calm and confident. In addition, staying physically active makes it easier to do everyday activities such as playing with your kids or carrying groceries.”

For some people, a busy schedule may stand in the way of physical activity. Keep in mind, however, small changes can make a big difference. You don’t have an hour to go to the gym every day? Break the time down into smaller increments. Taking the stairs at work and parking farther way from your office or the store are a couple of ways to increase physical activity. You also can take a quick walk around the block after dinner or make it a point to walk your dog three or four times per week. All of these little changes can add up quickly.

“If you think you’re too tired to exercise, consider the fact that more physical activity can boost energy and help you feel less tired,” Romano said. “Set goals to add more activity gradually over time. Also, don’t shy away from exercise because gym fees are too expensive. Walking is free and is a great way to exercise.”

Other forms of physical activity that are free or low cost include vacuuming, gardening, dancing, playing with your children or raking leaves.

Individuals with disabilities or illness can help themselves by being active. It is possible to adapt many physical activities for people with disabilities and health conditions. It is recommended you talk to your doctor before participating in an exercise program.

“No matter what form of physical activity you choose, you’re making a move in the right direction by adding more movement in your life,” Romano said.



pinterest.com/osufcs



twitter.com/okstateFCS



facebook.com/okstateFCS



humansciences.okstate.edu/fcs



instagram.com/oklahomastatefcs

