

## National Prevention Strategy

# ACTIVE LIVING



Engaging in regular physical activity is one of the most important things that people of all ages can do to improve their health. Physical activity strengthens bones and muscles, reduces stress and depression, and makes it easier to maintain a healthy body weight or to reduce weight if overweight or obese. Even people who do not lose weight get substantial benefits from regular physical activity, including lower risks of high blood pressure, diabetes, and cancer. Healthy physical activity includes aerobic activity, muscle-strengthening activities, and activities to increase balance and flexibility. As described by the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, adults should engage in at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity each week, and children and teenagers should engage in at least one hour of activity each day.

### ACTIONS: THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WILL

- ▶ Promote the development of transportation options and systems that encourage active transportation and accommodate diverse needs.
- ▶ Support coordinated, comprehensive, and multicomponent programs and policies to encourage physical activity and physical education, especially in schools and early learning centers.
- ▶ Support adoption of active living principles in community design, such as mixed land use, compact design, and inclusion of safe and accessible parks and green space.
- ▶ Develop and disseminate clinical guidelines, best practices, and tools for increasing physical activity and reducing the number of overweight and obese individuals.



### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Encourage community design and development that supports physical activity.
2. Promote and strengthen school and early learning policies and programs that increase physical activity.
3. Facilitate access to safe, accessible, and affordable places for physical activity.
4. Support workplace policies and programs that increase physical activity.
5. Assess physical activity levels and provide education, counseling, and referrals.

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## ACTIONS: PARTNERS CAN

### *Individuals and Families*

- ▶ Engage in at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity each week (adults) or at least one hour of activity per day (children).
- ▶ Supplement aerobic activities with muscle-strengthening activities that involve all muscle groups on 2 or more days a week.
- ▶ Consider following the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations for limiting TV time among children.

### *Community, Nonprofit, and Faith-Based Organizations*

- ▶ Offer low- or no-cost physical activity programs (e.g., intramural sports, physical activity clubs).
- ▶ Develop and institute policies and joint use agreements that address liability concerns and encourage shared use of physical activity facilities (e.g., school gymnasiums, community recreation centers).
- ▶ Offer opportunities for physical activity across the lifespan (e.g., aerobic and muscle-strengthening exercise classes for seniors).

### *Early Learning Centers, Schools, Colleges, and Universities*

- ▶ Provide daily physical education and recess to maximize time spent being physically active.
- ▶ Participate in fitness testing (e.g., the President's Challenge) and support individualized self-improvement plans.
- ▶ Support walk and bike to schools programs (e.g., Safe Routes to School) and work with local governments to make decisions about selecting school sites that can promote physical activity.
- ▶ Limit passive screen time.
- ▶ Make physical activity facilities available to the local community during non-school hours.

### *Health Care Systems, Insurers, and Clinicians*

- ▶ Conduct physical activity assessments, provide counseling, and refer patients to allied health care or health and fitness professionals.
- ▶ Support clinicians in implementing physical activity assessments, counseling, and referrals (e.g., provide training to clinicians, implement clinical reminder systems).

### *Businesses and Employers*

- ▶ Adopt policies and programs that promote walking, bicycling, and use of public transportation (e.g., provide access to fitness equipment and facilities, bicycle racks, walking paths, changing facilities with showers).
- ▶ Design or redesign communities to promote opportunities for active transportation (e.g., include places for physical activity in building and development plans).
- ▶ Sponsor a new or existing park, playground, or trail; recreation or scholastic program; or beautification or maintenance project.

### *State, Tribal, Local, and Territorial Governments*

- ▶ Design safe neighborhoods that encourage physical activity (e.g., include sidewalks, bike lanes, adequate lighting, multi-use trails, walkways, parks).
- ▶ Convene partners (e.g., urban planners, architects, engineers, developers, transportation, law enforcement, public health) to consider health impacts when making transportation or land use decisions.
- ▶ Support schools and early learning centers in meeting physical activity guidelines.

 Find more information at:

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