



Fitness

What is fitness?

Are you physically fit? Do you know what it really means? Most of us may think we have to be a super athlete to be fit, but that is not true. Fitness is defined as the body's capability to distribute inhaled oxygen to muscle tissue during increased physical effort. There are different levels of fitness. To compete and win in a triathlon is not something most of us can do. But it helps if we are fit enough for activities we want and need to do.

Why is fitness important?

We feel better and stronger when we are fit. We can do the tasks we need to do and still have some energy left. When you're fit, you know you can complete a physically challenging task, and you won't be exhausted from it.

Being fit also helps your overall health. Exercise is good for your heart, lungs and muscles. Exercise also helps decrease the risk for heart disease, diabetes and high blood pressure. It helps us feel better, sleep better and manage stress better!

How much exercise do I need to be fit?

This will vary with each person, but the general guidelines for moderate exercise are to walk briskly at least 30 minutes most every day, or 2½ hours a week. For those who love to move, a vigorous exercise might be to run for 1¼ hours a week.

What types of activities should I do?

For best results, practice these three components:

- **Flexibility:** stretching and being able to move your joints in a full range of motion comfortably. It's important to stretch both before and after your exercise routine.
- **Aerobic:** increasing your heart rate and breathing faster and deeper. Alternating activities like walking, running, bicycling and swimming is a good idea so you work different muscles and you don't get bored.
- **Muscle strength:** exercising your muscles to the point of failure. Failure is not a bad thing with strength training. When you do repetition exercises with weights until your muscles are too tired to continue, you're actually increasing your strength in the long run. When your muscles recover from the exercises, they will be stronger than they were before.

How do I start?

Check with your doctor first if you have any questions or if you have not been active for awhile. You can also check out the Healthwise® Knowledgebase for more information and some fun interactive tools. Go to fchp.org. Under "For members," scroll down to Healthwise® Knowledgebase. Once you're on the home page, either search "fitness" or click on Interactive Tools.

Becoming more fit can be fun. Start walking with a friend or join a class that appeals to you. Many of our insurance plans include an "It Fits" benefit that can reimburse members for a variety of different health activities.*

You may even find you like to be active and feel better!

*Benefits may vary by employer, plan or product.

More benefits. More services. More you.

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