

A person is captured in motion, running on a grassy hill. They are wearing an orange t-shirt, black athletic pants with white stripes down the side, and grey sneakers. In their right hand, they hold a bright yellow water bottle. The background shows a clear blue sky and a line of green trees on a distant hill. The overall scene conveys a sense of active lifestyle and physical fitness.

Physical Fitness

What is physical activity?

- *Physical activity* is any bodily activity that enhances or maintains physical fitness and overall health. It is performed for many different reasons. These include:
 - strengthening muscles and the cardiovascular system
 - honing athletic skills
 - weight loss or maintenance
 - enjoyment

Categories of physical activity

Aerobic exercise - biking riding, running, rowing, walking, hiking, tennis; this type of exercise involves or improves oxygen consumption by the body

Anaerobic exercise - weight training, functional training, sprinting; this type of exercise promote strength, speed and power

Strength training - muscle development and resistance training gained through weight lifting

Agility training - balance, coordination, speed, reflexes can be attained through such activities as yoga, and Pilates



National activity recommendations



Adults- Adults gain substantial health benefits from:

- Two and a half hours a week of moderate intensity aerobic activity, or one hour and 15 minutes of vigorous physical activity.

Examples of *moderate intensity* aerobics are:

- walking
- water aerobics
- dancing
- general gardening

Examples of *vigorous intensity* aerobics include:

- race walking
- running
- swimming laps
- or back packing

- Strength training is also highly recommended three times a week to improve muscle development and coordination. This can be done through weight lifting or agility training in activities such as yoga or Pilates.

National activity recommendations continued..



Adults with disabilities- Those who are able should get at least:

- Two and a half hours of moderate aerobic activity a week, or one hour and 15 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity a week.
- One should incorporate muscle-strengthening activities involving all major muscle groups two or more days a week.
- If a person is unable to meet these guidelines, they should engage in regular physical activity according to their abilities and should avoid inactivity.

People with chronic medical conditions- Adults with chronic conditions get important health benefits from regular physical activity. He or she should do so with the guidance of a health care provider.

Guidelines for a physically fit life style

- *Active Living* is a way of life that integrates physical activity into daily routines, like walking to the store or biking to work. Incorporating physical activity in a daily routine is much easier than one would think. A few simple examples would be:



- Taking the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Taking breaks from sitting at a desk and walk to get some water.
- Cleaning your home or apartment more often.
- Taking your pet for a longer than normal walk.
- Instead of driving to nearby places, walk.

Guidelines for a physically fit life style continued..

- Living a healthy and active life can be easy and fun, all you have to do is tweak your everyday activities to enjoy the lasting health benefits!



- Park your car further from your destination and walk.
- Do simple exercises, such as sit ups while you watch television.
- When getting treats with friends such as ice-cream suggest a short walk as you enjoy them.
- If you're looking for some activities with your friends try an afternoon at the pool or hiking and for the nighttime hit the dance floor and work up a sweat!

Common Misconceptions

- One should not put emphasis on team sports, but rather on developing healthy life style activities and habits.
- You do not need to be a gym member to be physically active! Take a jog or bike ride, or better yet grab a few friends and get game together. Joining yoga or boxing classes around your community is a great way to get active too.
- Working out doesn't need to cost a lot of money! Get creative with your workouts and use everyday items to spice them up. Try using heavy books for weights or whip up a makeshift jump rope. Use community spaces such as outdoor tracks or swimming pools to get great aerobic work outs for free!
- You are an individual and so is your body! You do not need to be a size two or a muscle man to be physical active and fit! The lasting health benefits will have you feeling good no matter your shape or size.



Benefits of physical activity

Frequent and regular physical exercise:

- Boosts the immune system.
- Helps prevent the diseases such as heart disease, cardiovascular disease, Type 2 diabetes and obesity.
- Improves mental health and helps prevent depression.

Physical exercise is important for:

- Maintaining physical fitness .
- Building and maintaining healthy bone density, muscle strength, and joint mobility.
- Promoting physiological well-being,
- Reducing surgical risks.
- Strengthening the immune system.



Benefits of physical activity

Exercise is great at:

- Fighting off stress

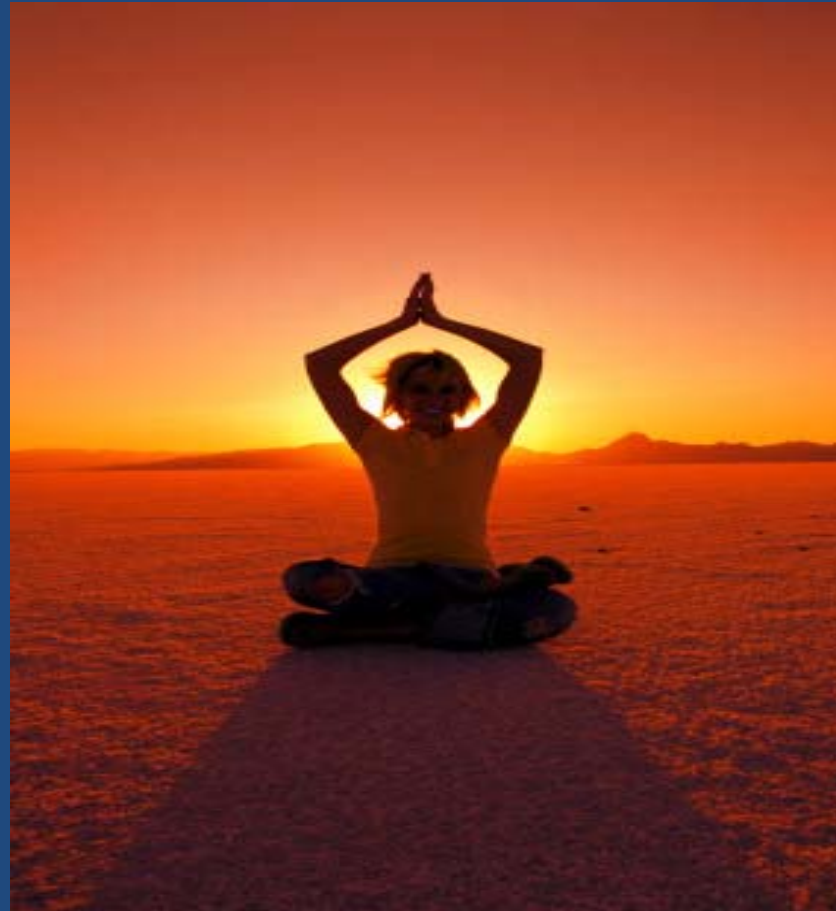
Exercise reduces levels of cortisol, better known as the “stress hormone”.

- Improving cognitive abilities.

Exercise has been shown to improve cognitive functioning and to be a neuroprotective. For instance, it reduces the risk of developing dementia.

- Working as a sleep aid and allows your body to get the rest it needs in order to recharge and recuperate.

- Both aerobic and anaerobic exercise also work to increase the mechanical efficiency of the heart by increasing cardiac volume (aerobic exercise), or myocardial thickness (strength training).



Safe and Active

- Although physical activity has many health benefits, injuries and other adverse events do sometimes happen. The most common injuries affect the musculoskeletal system (the bone, joints, muscles, ligaments and tendons). Other adverse events can occur during activity, such as overheating and dehydration.
- **To prevent** any injuries one should choose types of physical activity that are appropriate for their current level of fitness. Also, it is important to increase physical activity gradually over time. People should also protect themselves by using appropriate gear and sports equipment. Lastly, one must make smart choices about when, where and how to be active.



It is important to remember the health benefits of physical activity far outweigh the risks!

Additional Considerations

- Everyone should be physically active to improve overall health and fitness and to prevent many adverse health outcomes. However, some people have conditions that raise special issues about recommended types and amounts of physical activity.
- The benefits of physical activity for people with disabilities have been studied in diverse groups. Overall, the evidence has shown that regular physical activity provides important health benefits which include improved cardiovascular and muscle fitness, improved mental health and better ability to do tasks of daily life.



Campus Resources

Health Services

(603) 862-3823

www.unh.edu/health-services

Check out pedometers, meet with a nutrition counselor, take a free yoga class, and more!

Hamel Student Recreation Center

(603) 862-2031

<http://campusrec.unh.edu/>

The Department of Campus Recreation is committed to offering the latest equipment and state of the art facilities to the UNH community. Check out their facilities and great classes!