

Purdue Extension Does...By the Numbers!

Easy as GO! (Article from eatgathergo.org)

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How many steps should I take in a day? How many calories do I need to burn to stay healthy? How much physical activity do I need? Physical activity has many numbers associated with it, and sometimes, those numbers can be confusing. Therefore, here are simple answers to common questions about steps, calories and activity.

How many steps should I take in a day?

While many experts say that 10,000 daily steps is a good number, the truth is that any additional activity you do will likely benefit your health. Many smart phones now have free fitness trackers, so if your phone is on you, let it count your steps. You will likely be surprised at how many you take when you decide to move more. If you are active with your kids, you can share with them the number of steps or miles you have taken over the course of the day.

How many calories do I need to burn?

First, let us explain what calories are. Calories are a measurement tool, like inches or cups. Calories measure the energy a food or beverage provides from the carbohydrate, fat or protein it contains. Calories give you the fuel or energy you need to work and play – even to rest and sleep! When choosing what to eat and drink, it is important to get the right mix – enough nutrients without too many calories.

So how many calories does physical exercise burn? Check out the chart below. It shows how many calories a 5'10", 154-pound man will use up (burn) when doing different activities.

Remember, this chart is just an example. If you weigh more, you will use more calories, or if you weigh less, you will use fewer calories. In addition, calorie use varies from men to women. For more great information and help with calories and physical activity, use the SuperTracker.

How much physical activity do I need?

Physical activity is important for everyone, but how much you need depends on your age.

Adults (18-64 years)

Adults should do at least 2 ½ hours each week of aerobic physical activity at a moderate level OR 1 hour and 15 minutes each week of aerobic physical activity at a vigorous level.

Also, try strengthening activities, such as push-ups, sit-ups and lifting weights, at least 2 days a week.

Children and adolescents (6-17 years)

Children and adolescents should do 60 minutes or more of physical activity each day. Most of the 60 minutes should be either moderate- or vigorous intensity aerobic physical activity, and should include vigorous-intensity physical activity at least 3 days a week.

Also, include muscle-strengthening activities, such as climbing, at least 3 days a week and bone-strengthening activities, such as jumping, at least 3 days a week.

Young children (2-5 years)

No specific recommendation exists for the number of minutes young children should be active each day. However, children ages 2-5 years should play actively several times each day—and make sure the activities are developmentally appropriate, fun and offer variety.

Quick Tip Sheets on Physical Activity

Get healthy and strong with the free Quick Tip Sheets found at www.eatgathergo.org. They contain simple steps and helpful photos showing anything from how to warm up/cool down to how to take your pulse. Get yours today!

For more tips on physical activity, be sure to visit www.eatgathergo.org or contact Ashlee at Purdue Extension – Dubois County at 812-482-1782 or avniehau@purdue.edu.