



Physical Activity

What is Physical Activity?

Physical activity is any body movement that uses more energy than one would use while resting. Physical activity may be unplanned movement, whereas exercise generally refers to planned activity. Physical activity is divided into two intensity levels:

- **Moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity** increases heart rate. Brisk walking, biking, taking the stairs, dancing, and raking leaves are examples.
- **Vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity** causes one to sweat and breathe rapidly. Running, jogging, playing soccer, fast dancing such as salsa dancing and fast biking are examples.

Physical fitness is a measure of the ability to perform activities that require endurance, strength and/or flexibility.

- Health-related fitness includes cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength and endurance, body composition and flexibility.

Regular physical activity with healthy eating habits is the most efficient and healthful way to achieve physical fitness.

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California Nutrition and Physical Activity Guidelines for Adolescents

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Why is Physical Activity Important?

Physical activity has many benefits during adolescence, as shown in Figure PA-1.

Figure PA-1 Benefits of Physical Activity

In adolescents, physical activity has been linked with the following:

- Improved academic performance¹⁻⁴
- Reduced teen pregnancy⁵
- Improved self-esteem^{6,7}
- Improved bone⁷ and mental health⁶
- Less illegal drug use⁸
- Physical activity later in life^{9,10}

On the other hand, as shown in Figure PA-2, low activity levels may have negative consequences that can appear as early as childhood and adolescence.

Figure PA-2 Risks of Physical Inactivity and Poor Diets¹¹

- Obesity
- Type 2 diabetes
- Hypertension (high blood pressure)
- Heart disease
- Cancer
- Weak bones

In California, a large percentage of adolescents do not meet healthy weight recommendations. According to the 2009 California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) about 12% of adolescents aged 12-17 years were overweight/obese (highest 5th percentile) and approximately 16.7% of adolescents surveyed were at risk of overweight (85th to 95th percentile).^{12,*}

* For children and adolescents, overweight is age and gender-specific BMI greater than or equal to the 85th percentile but less than the 95th percentile. Obese is age and gender-specific BMI greater than or equal to the 95th percentile. [More definitions from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

These percentages are comparable with the 2007 National Children's Health Survey, where about 15.5% of children aged 10-17 years were overweight and about 15% were obese.¹³

The obesity epidemic has not affected all demographics equally. African-American and Hispanic adolescents are more likely to be overweight, elevating their risk of type 2 diabetes.¹⁴

Promoting and supporting regular physical activity in adolescents will help decrease the risk for these health conditions.

Physical Activity Statistics

Only 15.2% of California adolescents aged 12-17 years reported being physically active for at least one hour every day in a typical week, according to CHIS.¹⁵ This translates into poor fitness for California youth. The California Department of Education conducts annual fitness tests, one of which includes tests for aerobic capacity. In school year 2010-2011, of the ninth graders tested, 25.5% fell in the category of 'needs improvement' and 12.8% were in 'needs improvement – high risk.'¹⁶ This is problematic because low cardiorespiratory fitness in adolescence may be associated with more body fatness in adulthood.¹⁷

Physical Activity Level by Age

The percent of physically active adolescents decreases as they get older; for example, 17-year-olds are less active than 12-year-olds.^{11,18} This decline is greater in adolescent females who are African-American than those who are White.¹⁹

Some reasons for this decline may include lack of time for physical activity and lack of support from family and friends.²⁰ Consequently, time management techniques or tips may be useful. Involving parents and friends—either as participants in the activity, or to provide support, such as rides and encouragement, is another strategy that may help increase physical activity in adolescents.

Adolescents may prefer certain terms over others. In one focus group, teens said they are more familiar with the word “exercise” than “physical activity.” However, in another focus group, teen girls said that the term “physical activity” sounds more appealing and that “exercise” sounds like a chore.²¹ If “physical activity” is used, the term should be explained to teens to ensure they understand its meaning.

Physical Activity by Race/ Ethnicity

Hispanic, Asian and African-American adolescents are less physically active than White adolescents. Among Hispanic adolescents, physical activity levels appear to decrease with longer acculturation to the U.S.²²

A Family Approach

Many cultures place importance on the family. Try to stress benefits of physical activity for the entire family. For example, physical activity may help prevent diseases in parents and may promote positive behaviors in children. If children are active and healthy, the whole family will benefit. Promoting exercise as a family activity can be very effective in diverse settings.

Some family activities to suggest include:

- Playing traditional games
- Dancing to music, such as salsa dancing
- Taking a walk around the block
- Playing soccer at the park

Reaching an ethnically-diverse population may require promoting non-traditional¹⁰ forms of physical activity. Examples include indoor chores that are physical in nature, playing catch, running/jogging and playing with or carrying children. These activities are commonly reported by African-American and Hispanic teen girls.²³

It is important to be aware of cultural beliefs about physical activity. Some are passed down from elders and may interfere with the client’s ability to be active. Examples:

- “Exercise is only for boys”
- “Girls should not wear pants”
- “Girls should not exercise during their period”
- “You need to be heavy to be healthy”

Physical Activity by Gender

Generally female teens are less physically active than male teens. According to CHIS, only 8.4% of female teens aged 12-17 years reported engaging in physical activity all seven days in a typical week compared to 21.6% of male teens in 2009.¹⁵

Barriers and Opportunities

Barriers to physical activity for boys have included lack of time, being tired and pain. Benefits of physical activity cited by boys included improved health and appearance.²⁴ Figure PA-3 lists benefits and barriers to physical activity as reported by adolescent girls. Most were identified as Hispanic or African-American in these studies.

Figure PA-3. Benefits and Barriers to Exercise for Teen Girls

The following were seen as benefits that motivated physical activity:

- Improved body image or appearance^{21,25,26}
- Being part of a team
- Staying healthy
- Fun activities^{21,25}
- Mental health benefits²¹
- Being healthy²¹
- Being able to choose the physical activity^{2,21}
- Having a chance to play and be active^{3,24}
- Having social support and encouragement^{25,27}

The following were seen as barriers that limited physical activity:

- Lack of time²⁷
- Concerns about appearance during or after activity,^{23,25,26} such as fears of ruining hair and makeup²⁶ and sweating^{3,23}
- Self-consciousness²⁷
- Fear of looking masculine²⁸
- More accepting of larger body size²⁸
- Negative experiences in physical education classes^{25,26}
- Lack of opportunity^{25,26}
- Lack of role models who look like them²⁸
- Injury and discomfort²⁴
- Safety

“I do not have enough time.”

According to the 2004 California Teen Eating, Exercise and Nutrition Survey (CalTEENS), the main reason adolescents did not participate in physical activity was due to lack of time or being too busy (46%).²⁹ This was especially true for parenting adolescents.

Focusing on short opportunities to add physical activity into existing routines may be the most successful approach. More tips are in the “Barriers to Physical Activity” section on page PA-7 and “Tips for Addressing Physical Activity Concerns: A Guide for Case Managers” on page PA-10.

**Beauty/Appearance**

Hair and makeup concerns may be a primary reason why an ethnically diverse group of adolescent girls did not exert themselves during physical education classes.²⁶ Case managers can discuss this with the teen. If it is a barrier, they can provide examples of alternate activities that do not damage hair and makeup, such as dance, yoga, fast walking and lifting weights. Sweating can be minimized by wearing light clothing and exercising at cooler times, such as in the morning or evening. Case managers can also discuss ways to apply makeup quickly after exercising.

A focus group study found weight and fat loss as the teen girls’ strongest motivation to being physically active.²⁶ Emphasizing the benefit of improved appearance through exercise **without focusing on weight** may be effective in this population.

**Hair Care & Exercise**

Teens of any race/ethnicity but especially those who are African-American may cite hair concerns as a barrier to physical activity.

Case managers can assure clients that hair care and regular exercise are not mutually exclusive by providing the following tips:

- Ask the stylist about hairstyle options that are workout-friendly such as ponytails or “wash and go styles.”
- To prevent sweat from building up in hair, wash hair with a pH-balanced shampoo weekly and condition hair.
- Comb hair with a wide-tooth comb to keep it tangle-free in between workouts.
- Tie hair back with a satin scarf to absorb moisture and keep hair pressed down during workouts.
- If hair is relaxed or flat-ironed, smooth hair into a high ponytail to keep hair off the neck and away from sweat and leave it that way until hair is dry to reduce frizz.
- If hair is natural, simple styles such as two-strand twists are workout-friendly.
 - To avoid dry, crunchy hair, mix some water and leave-in conditioner and spray it on hair post-workout.
- Use a support system to hold each other accountable to working out and deter them from using hair as an excuse.

More tips are available from the booklet, [*Hair Care Tips for Sisters on the Move.*](#)

Every teen is different and has different interests. Case managers can be more effective if they actively listen to teens to find out what activities they enjoy. Providing multiple choices,²¹ encouragement and sharing personal experiences may be successful strategies to promote physical activity.^{21,30}

Physical Activity Recommendations

Note: These recommendations are for adolescents who are not pregnant. For pregnant adolescents, see page PA-6.

All adolescents should be physically active daily, or nearly every day.

Children and Adolescents Ages 6-17 Years³¹

- Children and adolescents should do 1 hour (60 minutes) or more of physical activity every day. Most of the 1 hour or more a day physical activity should be either moderate- or vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity.
- As part of their daily physical activity, children and adolescents should do vigorous-intensity activity on at least 3 days per week. They should do muscle- and bone-strengthening activity on at least 3 days per week.

Key Terms

In **bone-strengthening activities**, feet, legs, or arms support body weight. Walking, jumping rope, stair-climbing, dancing, soccer and lifting weights are examples of bone-strengthening activities.

Muscle-strengthening activities include lifting weights, push-ups and sit-ups, yoga, resistance band exercises and gardening.

Note that many activities are bone-strengthening and muscle-strengthening.

Definitions of moderate and vigorous physical activity are listed on page PA-1.

Adolescents Ages 18 Years or Older³¹

Physical activity recommendations are the same as those for adults:

- At least 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate-intensity per week or 1 hour and 15 minutes of vigorous-intensity physical activity every week.

- Muscle-strengthening activities should be done at least 2 times per week.

For more details and tips refer to the [2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans](#).

It is important to encourage young people to participate in physical activities that are appropriate for their age, that are enjoyable and that offer variety.

Physical activity can be performed continuously or intermittently throughout the day. The U.S. Surgeon General states that physical activity need not be strenuous to be beneficial. For example, brisk walking for 10 minutes at a time can count towards meeting the recommendation.

Increasing the frequency, time, or intensity of physical activity adds even more health benefits, up to a point. It should begin gradually. For example, one might try fast walking for 10 minutes each day for the first week and then progress to 15 minutes the following week and so forth.

Avoiding Pain and Injury

One study found injury to be the most commonly reported barrier to physical activity by teen girls.²³ Pain from exercise can be reduced by properly warming up for 5-10 minutes and stretching prior to exercising. Cooling down—continuing activity at a lower intensity—is important after the activity.³² Some useful links are below.

[Stretching information](#)
[Sample stretching exercises](#)

Injury Prevention Tips

Teens should follow preventive measures to avoid injury. These depend on the activity but can include the following:³³

- Proper nutrition
- Wearing a helmet while bicycling
- Wearing a helmet and pads when skiing, skate boarding, etc.
- Wearing a mouth guard for contact sports
- Wearing shin guards for soccer



Physical Activity for Pregnancy and Parenting

For pregnant teens, physical activity provides additional benefits that lead to a healthier, happier pregnancy, thus improving outcomes for mothers and babies. Some benefits are listed in Figure PA-4.

Figure PA-4. Benefits of Physical Activity during Pregnancy^{35,36}

- May help baby and mother gain the proper amount of weight
- Helps reduce discomforts of pregnancy such as backaches, constipation, bloating and swelling
- May help prevent or treat gestational diabetes
- Increases energy
- May improve mood
- May improve posture
- May improve sleep quality
- Promotes muscle tone, strength and endurance
- May make labor easier and shorter
- May lead to an easier recovery from childbirth
- May help mother to return to a healthy weight

Recommendations

Due to the benefits of exercise, the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) recommends regular physical activity during pregnancy for 30 minutes per day, most days of the week. It does not all have to be at one time.³⁴ Exercise should not be performed to lose weight.³⁵

Teens and women who are pregnant or recently gave birth should speak with their primary health care provider before exercising. This is important to screen for complications that would limit physical activity.³⁴ Also, the safety of specific exercises can be verified.

For beginners, walking, swimming, cycling on a stationary bike and aerobics are good exercises during pregnancy. Walking and swimming are good choices because they exercise the whole body and are easy on muscles and joints. Swimming can also help prevent legs from swelling.³⁵

Teens who exercised vigorously prior to pregnancy may be able to continue running, do strength training and play certain racquet sports for some time. However, teens should consult with a physician and perform all activities in moderation.

Many teens may enjoy walking, so the following might be encouraged:

- Walking to nearby places
- Going on walks with friends, family members, or a partner
- Walking around while doing other activities, such as talking on the phone or listening to music

See “Interventions/Referrals for Pregnancy and Parenting” on page PA-8 for sample activities or [view resources](#) available from the California Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC).

Special Considerations for Pregnancy

During pregnancy, physiological changes occur that limit certain exercise choices. The heart must work harder to supply blood to the body, so heart rate is a concern. Being able to talk while exercising indicates that the heart rate is in a safe range.

Body changes can also affect balance and stability. This includes extra weight and more mobile joints, which increases the risk of falls and injury.

Care must be taken not to become overheated. The client should not exercise during hot weather or if she has a fever. She should be sure to drink enough water when exercising.³⁵ She should avoid hot tubs, as she might overheat.

Figure PA-5 lists specific activities to avoid in pregnancy.

Figure PA-5. Activities to Avoid during Pregnancy³⁵

- High-risk activities that may lead to injuries, falls, or loss of balance. Adolescents should not participate in contact sports or physical activity that has a high risk for falling. Physical activity to be avoided during pregnancy include, but are not limited to soccer, football, martial arts, roller skating, roller blading, skate boarding, ice skating, scuba diving and skiing.
- Activities that require standing for long periods of time or lying on one's back after 20 weeks (4-5 months) of pregnancy. After the first trimester, the weight of the uterus can limit the circulation of blood, limiting circulation to the placenta and nutrients to the baby. Lying flat on the back after the first trimester may lead to low blood pressure. During pregnancy, long periods of inactivity should be avoided.
- Strenuous activity during the first trimester should also be avoided because it may overheat the fetus. Overheating may lead to birth defects. Pregnant teens should stop exercising when fatigued. Do not exercise to exhaustion.

“Interventions/Referrals for Pregnancy and Parenting” on page PA-8 lists some symptoms that may indicate medical problems. A health care provider should be contacted immediately if a client reports any of these symptoms, or if she says she is concerned about her health for **any reason.**



After Childbirth

Regular physical activities should be resumed gradually after childbirth.³⁶ The client should seek her health care provider's advice for how and when she should exercise based **on her unique situation.** When physical activity resumes to normal levels, use the recommendations on page PA-5 for non-pregnant adolescents.

Adolescents who breastfeed their babies can and should be physically active. Exercise does not affect milk production or quality.

Physical activity helps prevent many chronic conditions (listed earlier in the chapter). Being physically active and following a healthy diet after childbirth helps to lose excess weight.³⁷

Parenting teens who are physically active are role-modeling healthy behaviors for their child and by including them, help them to be healthy too. Activities that can be done together include:

- Taking the child for a walk using a baby carrier or stroller, or walking with other mothers
- Running or playing active games with children
- Carrying children
- Doing physical activities at the playground (e.g., using monkey bars for pull-ups).
- For more ideas, visit this WIC [webpage](#).

Barriers to Physical Activity for Pregnant and Parenting Adolescents

Engaging in physical activity may be challenging for pregnant and parenting adolescents. They may lack a friend with whom to exercise, or they may worry about their safety. In focus groups, pregnant and parenting adolescents indicated walking as their preferred activity. Ask the client about whether this is something she would enjoy.

Many pregnant and parenting adolescents are busy, so suggest breaking up their activity into 10-minute intervals. Encourage activities that can be incorporated into their lives and include their children as described above. They can perform household chores such as washing the car, vacuuming, or taking a child for a walk. When children are older, parenting teens can run and play with them.

Screening

Complete [How Active Am I?](#) with the client to assess her level of physical activity.

Interventions

See the next section for resources tailored to pregnant teens or those who recently gave birth. Print handouts back-to-back to save paper.

- Use the [Benefits of Exercise](#) handout to discuss the benefits of being active every day. Suggest exercising with friends or family, which would allow them to spend time together, motivate each other and improve the family's health
- Use the [Get Active!](#) handout to discuss recommended types and amounts of physical activity and sample activities
- Use the [Fitness Tips for Teens](#) handout to strategize with the client how she can increase her physical activity
- Use the [Body Basics](#) handout to learn the muscles that specific exercises engage
- Use the [How to Make a Home Gym](#) handout to identify simple no-cost exercises
- Use the [My Action Plan for Exercise](#) handout to help the client develop a plan to be more physically active. Help her come up with measurable short- and long-term goals. Discuss changes that the client can make today, tomorrow and in a few weeks. Remind the client that for all individuals, some activity is better than none
- Use [Tips for Addressing Physical Activity Concerns: A Guide for Case Managers](#) to help the client address specific challenges
- Help the client balance physical activity with healthy eating. Help her [create a profile and register](#) on the Supertracker website so she can:
 - Create a personalized food plan based on factors such as age, sex and physical activity level
 - Assess her current habits by entering in specific foods and activities
 - Monitor her eating and physical activity habits over time

Interventions/Referrals for Pregnancy and Parenting

Note: Pregnant and postpartum clients must receive permission from their primary health provider before starting to exercise.

- Review the [physical activity handouts](#) described in the previous section with the client
- Help the client learn about exercises she can do during specific stages of her pregnancy by reviewing [handouts](#) which are available in English and Spanish (after clicking on the link, scroll to handouts for physical activity)
- If the client has children, help her think of activities she can do with them. Go over the following [WIC handouts](#) for tips
- To balance physical activity with healthy eating, review the [MyPlate for Moms/My Nutrition Plan for Moms](#) handout with the client or help her [create a profile and register](#) on the Supertracker website for personalized food and physical activity plans (the pregnancy and breastfeeding option is only available for ages 18 and older)

Symptoms of a Medical Hazard

If the client is pregnant and reports the following symptoms, **seek medical attention immediately:**³⁸

- Vaginal bleeding
- Dizziness or feeling faint
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Headache
- Muscle weakness
- Calf pain or swelling
- Uterine contractions
- Decreased fetal movement
- Fluid leaking from the vagina

She should contact her health care provider if she is worried or concerned about her health for any reason.

Follow-Up

Review [the action plan](#) with the client to determine if she achieved her goal(s) for behavior change.

If the client did not make any changes, talk with her about what prevented her from doing so. Review the benefits of physical activity and see which (if any) are important to her. Validate her feelings. Work with her to identify strategies for removing any barriers.

If the client made changes but still falls short of the recommended physical activity, praise her for the changes that she made. Work with her to revise her action plan (change or add goals).

If the client has made changes and achieved the recommended physical activity, praise for the changes that she made. Help her consider a new action plan from another section in the Guidelines.

Tips for Addressing Physical Activity Concerns: A Guide for Case Managers

Concern	Suggested Response/Tips
“I am self-conscious about my looks when I exercise”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try not to let this feeling stop you from being active. A lot of girls your age feel this way. • Getting active will help you look and feel better about yourself. • Think of places to exercise where you do not have to worry about how you look, such as in your room, basement or garage.
“I am not motivated”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think about the great things that exercise can do for you. Write them down and carry the list with you. • Do activities that you enjoy. Dancing, walking with a friend or jumping while watching a movie all count! Just have fun! • Change your exercise activities before you get bored. • Try doing some abdominal crunches or sit-ups to get some good results quickly. This may help you stay motivated and keep going.
“I do not have anyone to exercise with me”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask a friend, neighbor, family member, or guardian to do some physical activity with you. • Think of things that you might like to do alone, such as jumping rope, dancing, jogging and biking. • Borrow an exercise video from the library or from a friend—some high-quality videos are also available for free on the CDC website. • Read about exercises you can do at home from handouts or websites. • Go on a walk with a child, or take a pet for a walk. You can make some money walking someone else’s dog and get some physical activity at the same time. • Join an organization that offers physical activity opportunities and other people with whom to exercise. Some ideas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Local Park and Recreation Departments ○ Local Public Health Department ○ After school programs ○ YMCA ○ Churches or community centers
“I am too busy”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your daily physical activity can be broken up into smaller times during the day for a total of 60 minutes. If you are a beginner, start with 5 to 10 minutes of activity each day for 1 week and then gradually increase the time each week. • Keep a daily physical activity log (on paper or electronically) to stay on track. • Try substituting exercise for TV a few times a week. If you are unable to do this, try doing some physical activity while you watch TV. For example, you can jog in place, do sit ups or crunches or ride an exercise bike or walker during your favorite shows. • Do one chore a day to increase your physical activity and accomplish some tasks at the same time. For example, rake leaves, wash windows, or wash your car.
“I don’t have enough money to join a gym”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think about ways that you can exercise that are free. Here are some examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If you feel safe in the location, try taking a walk outdoors! A walk outdoors can lower your stress and lift your spirits too! ○ Use milk or water bottles or canned goods as dumbbells to strengthen your muscles. ○ Walk someone’s dog and earn some extra money. ○ Find quality exercises that you can do at home from online videos, websites or handouts. You can also borrow a video from your library for free (just be sure to return it on time to avoid late fees!)
“I don’t feel like exercising when I have a bad or tiring day at school”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercising can help improve your mood and increase your energy. Say positive statements to yourself to help you stay motivated. Tell yourself you will feel good when you finish. • Turn on some wild music (that you like of course) to wake you up and put you in a better mood. Try making up a new dance.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell yourself that you are going to start moving on the count of 10. And just do it.
“The weather is too bad”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create your own fun-filled, unique exercise program designed specifically for a rainy or other type of “bad” weather day. • Think about using exercise playlists or dancing to your favorite music. • Do floor exercises (e.g., push-ups, sit-ups, stretching) or jog in place while watching your favorite TV show. • Try walking in the mall on a rainy day, or put on a raincoat and go outdoors anyway.
“Physical activity is hard work”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think of the rewards you will get from physical activity instead of seeing it as an unwanted chore or burden. Think of all of the benefits you will reap from exercising, like staying healthy and keeping a healthy weight! • Do something that is easy and fun. You do not have to lift weights, run, or go to the gym. You can walk in the mall, dance, or walk with your pet – just move instead of sitting. • Make physical activity an important part of your life. Eventually doing physical activity should become easier for you when you do it on a regular basis.
“My schoolwork gets in the way of my physical activity”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do a good job on your schoolwork but try to be efficient so that no time is wasted. You need to have time to do the physical activities you enjoy. • Try combining some physical activity with your homework, like floor exercises with reading or memorizing information. Take physical activity breaks in between schoolwork! • Ask a friend to quiz you while you exercise.

This table has been adapted with permission from author Lorraine Robbins.²⁷

Web Links Referenced/Additional Resources

Title	Resource Type	URL
CDC information on BMI for children and teens	Webpage	http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi/childrens_BMI/about_childrens_BMI.html
Booklet on hair care and exercise: Hair Care Tips for Sisters on the Move	Document (PDF)	http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/healthliteracy/files/sisters.pdf
2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans	Webpage	http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/
Stretching information from girlshealth.gov	Webpage	http://kidshealth.org/PageManager.jsp?dn=girlshealth&lic=175&article_set=52711&ps=204&cat_id=20591
Sample stretches from girlshealth.gov	Webpage	www.girlshealth.gov/fitness/exercise/stretching.cfm
WIC physical activity resources for mothers and children	Webpage	http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Pages/WICEducationMaterialsActiveLiving.aspx
How Active Am I? My Action Plan for Exercise handout	Document (PDF)	http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/NutritionandPhysicalActivity/Documents/MO-NUPA-HowActiveAmIActionPlan.pdf
Benefits of Exercise handout	Document (PDF)	http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/NutritionandPhysicalActivity/Documents/MO-NUPA-BenefitsofExercise.pdf
Get Active! handout	Document (PDF)	http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/NutritionandPhysicalActivity/Documents/MO-NUPA-GetActive.pdf
Fitness Tips for Teens handout	Document (PDF)	http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/NutritionandPhysicalActivity/Documents/MO-NUPA-FitnessTips.pdf
Body Basics Handout	Document (PDF)	http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/NutritionandPhysicalActivity/Documents/MO-NUPA-BodyBasics.pdf
How to Make a Home Gym handout	Document (PDF)	http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/NutritionandPhysicalActivity/Documents/MO-NUPA-HomeGym.pdf
SuperTracker webpage for personalized nutrition and physical activity information	Webpage – interactive tool	https://www.supertracker.usda.gov/CreateProfile.aspx
Sample exercises for pregnancy from the Comprehensive Perinatal Services Program	Document (PDF)	www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/healthyliving/childfamily/Documents/MO-CPSP-STT-Handouts.pdf
MyPlate for Moms/My Nutrition Plan for Moms	Document (PDF)	www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/NutritionandPhysicalActivity/Documents/MO-NUPA-MyPlateForMoms.pdf
Physical activity and healthy eating information for pregnancy and breastfeeding		www.choosemyplate.gov/pregnancy-breastfeeding.html

CDC exercise videos	Webpage	www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/videos/index.html
Best Bones Forever physical activity page	Webpage	http://www.bestbonesforever.gov/physical_activity/index.cfm
Best Bones Forever video/dance routine featuring teen girls and Michelle Obama	Video (~5 min.)	www.youtube.com/watch?v=TBYGjAzuu2E&lr=1&uid=QGLiqGUZeeOjhcLE2-2NDA
More nutrition and physical activity links from the California Department of Public Health, Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Division	Webpage	www.cdph.ca.gov/healthinfo/healthyliving/nutrition/Pages/NutritionandPhysicalActivityLinks.aspx

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Benefits of Exercise

If you are pregnant, talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program.
Ask about the activities that are right for you.

Exercise can help you...

- look and feel great
- have more energy
- be more fit and flexible
- have firmer muscles
- lower your stress
- have stronger bones
- manage your weight
- have a stronger heart
- lower your blood pressure
- lower your cholesterol



In pregnancy, exercise has extra benefits. It can help...

- you feel less tired
- you sleep better
- improve your mood
- improve your posture and reduce back pain
- reduce constipation
- reduce bloating and swelling
- make your muscles stronger for labor
- prevent or treat diabetes

Get Active!



Key Words

- **Moderate aerobic exercise** makes your heart beat faster.
 - **Vigorous aerobic exercise** makes you sweat and breathe faster.
- The talk test:** If you are vigorously active, you should not be able to talk comfortably and exercise at the same time.

Goals

- Aim for at least 1 hour of moderate to vigorous aerobic exercise every day. You can split the hour into sessions that are at least 10 minutes each. If you can't do 1 hour, do what you can. A little more exercise can make a big difference.
- Try to do vigorous aerobic activity at least 3 days per week. If you're not active right now, start with only 1 day per week and slowly increase to 3 days per week.
- Do muscle and bone strengthening activities at least 3 days per week to stay strong.
- **Most pregnant teens should exercise 30 minutes or more on most if not all days of the week. Talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program. Ask about the activities that are right for you.**



Examples of Vigorous Aerobic Exercises:

- Running or jogging with friends, family, or pets (if pregnant, usually okay if you ran before pregnancy, but ask your doctor first)
- Fast dancing or swimming
- Playing soccer, tag, basketball, or tennis (do not do if pregnant)



Examples of Moderate Aerobic Exercises:

- Walking briskly. Try walking with children or walking to school/work.
- Biking, climbing stairs, or dancing
- Raking leaves, sweeping, vacuuming or scrubbing floors, mowing the lawn

Examples of Easy Bone and Muscle-Strengthening Exercises:

Walking, lifting weights or children, climbing stairs

Fitness Tips for Teens

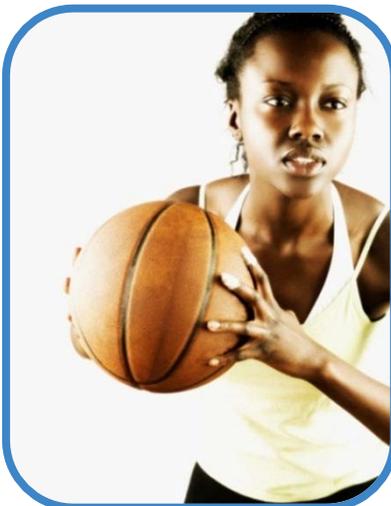
If you are pregnant, talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program. Ask about the activities that are right for you. See *Safety Tips* on the next page for more information.

Exercise –it is a way of life

- If you are not regularly active, start gradually. Walk a little more or lift light weights. Increase the amount of weights when you are ready.
- Choose activities that YOU like. Maybe you would like to dance at home. Walk briskly while you window-shop or while chatting with your best friend.
- Find out when you like to exercise. Are you a morning or an evening person? If you are busy, break up your exercise into 10-minute sessions throughout the day.
- Spare your coffee money and try exercising to stay awake! Exercise can give you the energy-boost that you need.
- Team up with friends so you can motivate each other. Or, join a group activity and make new friends while exercising!
- Map your walking or running route. Choose a safe route that is well-lit and does not have missing sidewalks. Use a city map or create a map online at www.mapmyrun.com/search.
- If you enjoy Wii Fitness®, use that to get moving. If you have a smart phone, use apps to help you exercise and stay on track with goals. If you are pregnant, make sure the activities you choose are safe for your pregnancy. Talk to your doctor and read the safety tips on the next page.



Just MOVE –every day, anytime and anywhere!



- Walk to places that are close by. Park your car or get off the bus farther away from you are going.
- Do chores that get you moving — walk the dog, mow the lawn, vacuum, pull weeds, or wash the car.
- Use any chance to get up and move around. Every little bit makes a difference! Here are some ideas:
 - Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
 - Walk or ride a bike to school.
 - Be active in physical education (P.E.) class.
 - Stretch or run in place while watching TV.
- Remember that all physical activity is good for you— sports, planned exercise, household chores, even yard work.

Make it a family affair—exercise with your family!

- If you take care of younger children, don't just watch them play tag or kick a ball. Join them! You can also push swings or climb on the jungle gym.
- Take young children on a walk in the stroller. Not only does this exercise your whole body, it can help put children to sleep!
- Help your family stay healthy. Exercise with parents, grandparents, and children to help prevent heart disease or type 2 diabetes. They will be happy when you are healthy. Try dancing to music or walking with your family.



Get toned by building muscles

- When you work your muscles, they burn calories even when you are not working out! Working your muscles can also help you look more fit and toned. You can carry things more easily.
- You can do muscle-strengthening activities while listening to music or even in front of the TV! Try lifting weights or water bottles or do some crunches.

No gym? No problem!

- You do not need a fitness center or have to do high-intensity workouts. Making small changes, like walking more, is just as effective. And all you need is a pair of shoes!
- You can make a cheap gym right at home. Ask your case manager for the handout, *How to Make a Home Gym*.

Safety Tips

- Warm up and stretch before you exercise.
- Wear athletic shoes that are for walking or running.
- Wear bright clothing when it's dark.
- Use sunscreen. Drink enough water.
- To avoid overheating, do not exercise in hot, humid weather or when you have a fever.
- Wear a helmet and padding if skating or biking.

Pregnant teens should not skate or bike.

- Talk to your doctor if you feel light-headed, your chest hurts, or if you have nausea, severe muscle pain, or joint pain as these could be signs of something wrong.

- **If you are pregnant, talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program.**

After doing so, remember:

- **Do not scuba dive, ski, or play contact sports such as soccer, basketball and hockey. These activities can be harmful for your pregnancy.**
- **Do not do jumping activities. Avoid quick motions that could strain your joints.**
- **Do not do activities with a high risk of falling, such as gymnastics or horseback-riding.**
- **After the first trimester, avoid exercises that require lying down on your back.**





Body Basics

Check out which activities work specific muscles of your body!

If you are pregnant, talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program. Ask about the activities that are right for you.

Exercises for Everyone *Good for Pregnancy*	Muscles Worked
Running (if pregnant, usually okay if you ran before pregnancy, but ask your doctor first)	Calves (lower leg), front/back thigh
Swimming	Nearly all major muscles
Walking	Arms, calves, front/back thigh, abdominals
Cycling on a stationary bike	Calves, front/back thigh
Dancing	Nearly all major muscles but varies by type of dance
Push-ups	Chest, shoulders, arms, abdominals
Squats -- See the <i>Fitness Tip</i>	Calves, front/back thigh, butt
Crunches (if pregnant, avoid after 1st trimester)	Abdominals

More Exercises *Do not do if Pregnant*	Muscles Worked
Jumping rope	Calves, thighs, abdominals, shoulders, arms
Skating	Inner/outer thigh, butt
Jumping Jacks	Calves, inner/outer thigh, butt

Adapted from the Office on Women's Health <www.girlshealth.gov/fitness/exercise/musclegroups.cfm>

Fitness Tip: How to do a Squat

1. In front of a sturdy, armless chair, stand with feet slightly more than shoulder-width apart. Extend your arms out so they are parallel to the ground and lean forward a little at the hips.
2. Lower yourself in a slow, controlled motion, to a count of four, until you are almost sitting. Do not sit down too quickly.
 - Make sure your knees **never** come forward past your toes.
 - Place more of your weight on your heels than on the balls or toes of your feet to help keep your knees from moving forward past your toes.
3. Pause, count to two. Slowly stand up. Keep your knees over your ankles and your back straight. Repeat.
 - Do not lean your weight too far forward or onto your toes when standing.

Note: If this exercise is too hard, start off by using your hands for help. If you are unable to go all the way down, put a few pillows on the chair.



Adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/growingstronger/exercises/stage1.html>

How to Make a Home Gym

If you are pregnant, talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program.
Ask about the activities that are right for you.



Get jumping!

- Jump rope for 30 seconds, rest, and repeat.
- Put the jump rope on the floor and jump from side to side for 20 seconds. Then rest and repeat. **Do not do if pregnant.**

Grab a towel

Grab the ends of a towel and raise it from behind your head to over your head. Do it 10 times, then rest, and repeat.

“Ab twist” with a ball (any size)

Sit on the floor with legs bent, feet shoulder-width apart, and toes pointing up so that you are resting on your heels. Hold the ball with both hands and extend your arms out in front of you. Twist your waist from side to side. Do 10 on each side, rest, and repeat.

Playground gym

- If you live near a park or take care of kids, use the jungle gym as a chin up bar! Do as many chin ups as you can.
- You can also hang and raise your legs, keeping them straight. Do this 10 times, rest, and repeat.

Home-made dumbbells

Use water bottles or milk jugs filled with dirt or sand, or canned food as dumbbells/weights:

- **Do bicep (upper arm) curls.** Stand with feet shoulder-width apart. Hold weights straight down at your sides, palms facing forward. Slowly bend your elbows and lift weights toward chest. Keep elbows at your sides. Hold the position for 1 second. Slowly lower your arms. Repeat 10-15 times. Rest, then repeat 10-15 more times.
- **Do front arm raises.** Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Hold weights straight down at your sides, with palms facing backward. Keeping them straight, raise both arms in front of you to shoulder height. Hold the position for 1 second. Slowly lower your arms. Repeat 10-15 times. Rest, then repeat 10-15 more times.
- **Do side arm raises.** You can do this exercise while standing or sitting in a sturdy, armless chair. Keep your feet flat on the floor, shoulder-width apart. Hold hand weights straight down at your sides with palms facing inward. Raise both arms to the side, shoulder height. Hold the position for 1 second. Slowly lower your arms. Repeat 10-15 times. Rest, then repeat 10-15 more times.

How Active Am I?

Check off your time spent on the activities listed. **If you are pregnant, talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program. Ask about the activities that are right for you.**

Activity	1-2 x month	1-2 x week	3-4 x week	Every day
Sedentary (not moving)				
Watching television				
Video games or computer time				
Reading books/magazines				
Going to the movies				
Talking on the phone, texting or using the internet				
Taking a nap				
Active (for everyone—good for pregnancy)				
Walking				
Dancing				
Swimming				
Throwing a Frisbee				
Stretching or prenatal yoga				
Table tennis				
Lifting weights (dumbbells, canned soup, water bottles)				
Yard work (weeding, mowing, raking)				
Housework (dusting, sweeping, vacuuming, mopping, washing windows)				
Cycling on a stationary bike				
Using apps or electronics for physical activity, such as Wii® (if pregnant, this depends on the activity, so ask your doctor about the activity first)				
Jogging or running (usually okay if you ran before you were pregnant, but ask your doctor first)				
Active (do not do if pregnant)				
Skating, skiing or skateboarding				
Jumping rope				
Riding a bike				
Team sports (for example, bowling, basketball, baseball, softball, soccer, football, volleyball)				

Try to have more active and fewer sedentary activities each day. Now complete *My Action Plan for Exercise* to achieve this goal!

My Action Plan for Exercise

If you are pregnant, talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program, in case you have a health condition that limits your activity. Ask about what activities are right for you.

I plan to spend less time on sedentary activities that require little or no energy:

Activity (example: watching TV)	Time spent now? (per week or day)	How often will I do it? (per week or day)

I plan to spend more time on these active activities:

Activity (example: walking)	Time spent now? (per week or day)	How often will I do it? (per week or day)

I plan to add the following active activities:

New activity (example: dancing)	How often will I do it? (per week or day)

Exercise Tips

- ✓ Get your girlfriend, boyfriend, friends, or family involved! Everyone will be healthier. You can help each other stay on track. You will have more fun!
- ✓ Get a calendar (or make one) and mark off each day that you met your goal. Free calendars are available for download at www.printablecalendar.ca.