



# Medical Self-Assessment

## Exercise and Food for Thought Tips

### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

#### **Endurance and Aerobic Exercises**

Endurance/aerobic exercises increase the overall health of your heart, lungs, and circulatory system. It's recommended that you participate in some type of endurance/aerobic activity for at least 30 minutes on most days of the week. Types of activities include walking, running, biking, and swimming. Biking and swimming are recommended for those that may have knee and back pain. If you're unable to fit in one 30-minute time period, or if you get tired, try breaking it up into three 10-minute intervals throughout the day.

#### **Strength and Resistance Exercises**

Strength/resistance exercises build your muscles and also increase your metabolism, helping to keep your weight and blood sugar in check. Studies suggest that strength exercises may also help prevent osteoporosis.

Try to perform resistance exercises two to three days per week with at least 24 hours of rest between sessions. Work at an intensity that feels somewhat hard but is still achievable. Start out slowly and work up to 2 to 3 sets of 10 to 15 repetitions. Examples of total body resistance exercises include squats, pushups, bicep curls, tricep extensions, front shoulder raises, and planks.

#### **Maintain Weight with Aerobic Exercises**

You'll need to exercise a total of at least:

- 150 minutes moderate-intensity workouts each week or
- 75 minutes vigorous-intensity workouts each week
- You may also combine moderate- and vigorous-intensity exercises

*A general rule of thumb is that 2 minutes of moderate-intensity activity counts the same as 1 minute of vigorous-intensity activity. For example, 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity a week is roughly the same as 15 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity.*



**Moderate intensity** is described as being able to carry on a conversation, while your breathing and heart rate are noticeably faster than normal. Examples:

- Walking briskly
- Light yard work
- Biking at a casual pace

**Vigorous intensity** is described as not being able to carry on a conversation, while your breathing and heart rate are increased substantially. Examples:

- Jogging
- Running
- Swimming laps
- Competitive sports
- Jumping rope

To lose weight you'll need to increase the amount of physical activity unless you also make diet changes and reduce calorie intake.

[The American Heart Association \(www.heart.org\)](http://www.heart.org) has a great calculator that provides recommendations based on your input for daily calorie needs, range for total fats, and limits for bad fats (saturated and trans). It also provides examples of lower-fat meat and dairy products that can help you stay within your daily-recommended limits for total fats, saturated fats, trans fats, and cholesterol ([www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/FatsAndOils/Fats101/My-Fats-Translator\\_UCM\\_428869\\_Article.jsp](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/FatsAndOils/Fats101/My-Fats-Translator_UCM_428869_Article.jsp)).

## NUTRITION

### A Healthy Diet

It's not just what you eat, but also how much you eat. Portion control is probably one of the most effective ways to keep your weight in line when combined with physical activity. Also, studies have shown that keeping track of what you eat each day can help you maintain or lose weight. Use a small logbook or diary to record meals and snacks. If that is difficult for you to adhere to, at least consider the following tips.

#### Tip 1—From ChooseMyPlate.gov:

- Eat slowly and pay attention to how hungry or full you feel
- Use a smaller plate to help with portion control



- Choose healthy options when eating out; read nutrition information if it is provided on the menu
- Use fruit for dessert
- Limit foods high in fats, sugars, and salt
- Eat more vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and fat-free dairy products

**Tip 2—Understand your food intake:**

- Read the food label to understand portion sizes
- Measure portions, don't guess; if available, use measuring cups and spoons
- Don't eat snacks out of a bag or container, you will lose track of how much you have consumed; instead pre-measure your portion and put it on a plate

**Tip 3—When shopping, think about foods appropriate for a healthy diet:**

- Choose whole grain cereals, breads, rice, and pasta
- Instead of full milk, try switching to 2%, then to 1% or skim milk
- Choose fewer foods high in solid fats such as pizza, cheese, and sausage
- Opt for more vegetables and fruits when you fill the shopping cart
- Choose water or 100% fruit juice instead of fruit-flavored drinks or sodas

**Tip 4—Size up your portions with these rule-of-thumb measurements:**

Food	Serving Size	Measurement
Bagel	1	hockey puck
Cereal	1 cup	clenched fist
Cheese	1 ½ ounces	4 stacked dice
Fish	3 ounces	check book
Fruit	1 cup	baseball
Mashed potatoes	½ cup	tennis ball
Meat	3 ounces	card deck
Muffin	1	light bulb or large egg
Nuts	¼ cup	golf ball
Pancake	4 inches	CD
Pasta	½ cup	tennis ball
Peanut butter	2 tablespoons	ping-pong ball
Salad greens	1 cup	baseball
Small potato	1	PC mouse
Soup	1 cup	clenched fist
Vegetables	1 cup	baseball

### Tip 5—Healthy snacks to take on the road or flight:

- Plenty of water
- Almonds, walnuts, pistachios, and peanuts
- Apples, pears, peaches, oranges, and bananas
- Raw carrots, celery, and cucumber
- Whole-grain cereal, pretzels, and crackers
- Fat-free yogurt
- Granola bars
- Cherry tomatoes

### Links—Try these online health sites for more tips, including recipes, and free health trackers and calculators to use on tablets and smartphones:

#### *Physical activity:*

- Move Your Way: Interactive Tool  
[health.gov/moveyourway/activity-planner](https://health.gov/moveyourway/activity-planner)
- Physical Activity for a Healthy Weight  
[www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/physical\\_activity/index.html#Why](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/physical_activity/index.html#Why)
- Tips for Increasing Physical Activity  
[health.gov/our-work/physical-activity](https://health.gov/our-work/physical-activity)

#### *Nutrition:*

- Choose My Plate  
[www.choosemyplate.gov/](https://www.choosemyplate.gov/)
- Healthy Eating Tips  
[www.myplate.gov/tip-sheet/healthy-eating-adults](https://www.myplate.gov/tip-sheet/healthy-eating-adults)
- Weight Management & Calories  
<https://www.myplate.gov/life-stages/adults>
- Food Data Central  
[fdc.nal.usda.gov/](https://fdc.nal.usda.gov/)
- Recipe Finder  
[www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/recipes-and-meal-planning](https://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/recipes-and-meal-planning)
- My Plate Smart Phone App  
[myplate.gov/resources/tools/startsimple-myplate-app](https://myplate.gov/resources/tools/startsimple-myplate-app)
- CalorieKing: Weight Control Tools  
[www.calorieking.com/](https://www.calorieking.com/)
- Innit: A personalized solution to shop for the right ingredients  
[www.innit.com/](https://www.innit.com/)
- My Fats Translator  
[www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/FatsAndOils/Fats101/My-Fats-Translator\\_UCM\\_428869\\_Article.jsp](https://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/FatsAndOils/Fats101/My-Fats-Translator_UCM_428869_Article.jsp)

