



Updated Report Regarding

Physical Activity and Public Health

Many of you are familiar with the Recommendations for Adults regarding Physical Activity by the U.S. Surgeon General....

“Every U.S. adult should accumulate 30 minutes or more of moderate-intensity physical activity on most, preferably all, days of the week.”

This 1995 recommendation was issued in an effort to provide a “clear and concise” message that would promote physical activity among a sedentary population. According to an article in *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*, data compiled from 1990 to 2005 reveal that less than half of U.S. adults are meeting this recommendation.

In 2003, an expert panel was assembled to review and update the original Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) and the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) recommendation. As a result, updated recommendations were recently released.

1. Healthy adults need moderate-intensity aerobic activity for a minimum of 30 minutes, five days per week, or vigorous-intensity aerobic activity for a minimum of 20 minutes, three days per week, to promote and maintain health. Moderate-intensity aerobic activity requires more effort than simply walking around the house, shopping, cooking, etc. The heart-rate and breathing rate should be elevated. Vigorous-intensity aerobic activity requires a high level of effort, raising the heart rate and breathing rate considerably.
2. Healthy adults should participate in activities that increase muscular strength and endurance for a minimum of two days per week, to promote and maintain good health and physical independence. The panel recommends doing eight to 10 strength exercises on two or more non-consecutive days each week using the major muscle groups. To maximize strength development, resistance should be used that results in volitional fatigue in eight to 12 repetitions.
3. Additional health benefits and higher levels of physical fitness can be achieved by participating in muscle-strengthening and aerobic activities above the minimum recommendation. Participating in weight-bearing and higher-impact activities will further benefit skeletal health. To prevent unhealthy weight gain, some adults may need to increase their activity levels beyond the minimum recommendation to meet their individual needs, while also considering food intake and other factors that affect body weight.

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888-904-8448 ~ www.CKFitnessOnline.com ~ ckfit@cox.net