

How much physical activity do children need?

! COVID-19: How to Be Physically Active While Social Distancing

Parents: Check out this [print-friendly age chart](#) [PDF-422KB] for a quick snapshot of the recommended amount of weekly activity for children and teens.

This depends on how old your child is, and ranges from being active throughout the day for preschool-aged children (ages 3 through 5 years) to being active for 60 minutes or more for school-aged children and adolescents (ages 6 through 17 years). This may sound like a lot, but don't worry! Your child may already be meeting the recommended physical activity levels. And, you'll soon discover all the easy and enjoyable ways to help your child meet the recommendations. Encourage your child to participate in activities that are age-appropriate, enjoyable, and offer variety!

[Get tips on helping your child stay active.](#)

Recommended Levels for Preschool-Aged Children (ages 3 through 5 years)

- Preschool-aged children (ages 3 through 5 years) should be physically active throughout the day for growth and development.
- Adult caregivers should encourage preschool-aged children to be active when they play.

Recommended Levels for School-Aged Children and Adolescents (ages 6 through 17 years)

- Children and adolescents ages 6 through 17 years should do 60 minutes (1 hour) or more of moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity each day, including daily aerobic – and activities that strengthen bones (like running or jumping) – 3 days each week, and that build muscles (like climbing or doing push-ups) – 3 days each week.

Kids Need Physical Activity to Grow up Strong and Healthy



Check out the [Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2nd Edition](#) [PDF-15.2MB] for more information about the recommended levels of physical activity for children.

You can also learn more about physical activity levels for your child from the [Move Your WaySM Factsheet for Parents](#) [PDF-1.6MB]

These three types of physical activity should be included each week for children and adolescents:

1. Aerobic Activity

Most of your child's daily 60 minutes of physical activity should be aerobic activities, like walking, running, or anything that makes their hearts beat faster. In addition, encourage them to do aerobic activities at least 3 days a week that make them breathe fast and their hearts pound.



2. Muscle-Strengthening

Include muscle-strengthening activities, such as climbing or doing push-ups, at least 3 days per week as part of your child's daily 60 minutes or more.

3. Bone-Strengthening

Include bone-strengthening activities, such as jumping or running, at least 3 days per week as part of your child's daily 60 minutes or more.

Want examples of [what counts](#)? Check out the aerobic, muscle-strengthening, and bone-strengthening activity for children and adolescents.

[Learn how school-based physical activity can help children meet the recommended 60 minutes of daily physical activity.](#)



How do I know if my child's aerobic activity is moderate- or vigorous-intensity?

Here are two ways to think about a moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic activity:

1. On a scale of 0 to 10, where sitting is a 0 and the highest level of activity is a 10, moderate-intensity activity is a 5 or 6. When your child does moderate-intensity activity, their heart will beat faster and they will breathe much harder than when they are at rest or sitting. Vigorous-intensity activity is a level 7 or 8. When your child does vigorous-intensity activity, their heart will beat much faster than normal and they will breathe much harder than normal.
2. Another example, is when your child walks to [school](#) with friends each morning. They're probably doing moderate-intensity aerobic activity. But while at school, when your child runs, or chases others by playing tag during recess, they're probably doing vigorous-intensity activity.

What do you mean by “age-appropriate” activities?

Some physical activity is better-suited for children than adolescents. For example, younger children usually strengthen their muscles when they do gymnastics, play on a jungle gym, or climb trees. Children do not usually need formal muscle-strengthening programs, such as lifting weights. As children grow older and become adolescents, they may start structured weight lifting programs. For example, they may do these types of programs along with their football or basketball team practices.

Tips on Getting Children Active

Making Physical Activity a Part of a Child's Life

How can you help your child get the recommended amount of physical activity? What can you do to get your child active? Find out [here](#)!



All of Us Have a Role to Play in Increasing Physical Activity

Learn more about CDC's nationwide initiative to help 27 millions Americans including 7 million youth become more physically active.

[Join Active People, Healthy Nation](#)