

# Balancing Diet and Exercise



***If I exercise every day, does that mean I can eat whatever I want?***

**Short Answer:** No. Food choices and physical activity are both necessary for promoting overall good health.

**Long Answer:** The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans report begins with, “Eating and physical activity patterns that are focused on consuming fewer calories, making informed food choices, and being physically active can help people attain and maintain a healthy weight, reduce their risk of chronic disease, and promote overall health.”

According to the National Weight Control Registry, people who successfully lost weight and then maintained that new weight for at least 5 years reported that they did 60 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity per day. Additional healthful habits included eating a low-calorie, low-fat diet, eating

breakfast, weighing themselves regularly, and maintaining a consistent eating pattern across weekdays and weekends. A combination of daily physical activity and healthful eating can lead to long-term weight management success.

## **How much exercise is recommended?**

In order to achieve significant health benefits, the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommend:

- At least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise per week, or...
- 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic exercise per week, or...
- An equivalent combination of moderate and vigorous intensity aerobic exercise.

## **Why bother with maintaining a healthful diet and being physically active?**

The scientifically-supported data indicates that if you do these things, you will have a lower risk of...

- Early death
- Coronary heart disease
- Stroke
- High blood pressure
- Type 2 diabetes
- Depression

**Key Message:** Some physical activity is better than no physical activity. Accumulate a minimum of 20 minutes of moderately intense exercise every day for overall good health.

*By Lynn Grieger RDN, CDE, CPT, CWC*

Access the list of sources at <http://www.communicatingfoodforhealth.com/balancing-diet-exercise/>

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