



## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Being physically active has benefits for both the body and mind. Regular physical activity supports healthy growth, development and immune function. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is even more important for people of all ages and abilities to be as active as possible, especially when so many of us are restricted in our movements.



### Benefits of regular physical activity:

- Improve bone health and muscle strength
- Increase stability and balance
- Build endurance and overall fitness
- Improve mental health and feelings of wellbeing

While gyms, community centers and public parks are closed during the pandemic, being active and getting exercise is still possible with some modifications to our normal routines. Remember that physical activity doesn't only mean exercising at a gym, or playing a team sport – dancing, playing, walking, stretching and even house cleaning are all part of being active. Below are some tips and resources about how to be physically active while practicing physical distancing.

### GUIDELINES

To lead a healthy lifestyle, adults over the age of 18 years should do at least **150 minutes** of moderate-intensity physical activity or at least **75 minutes** of vigorous-intensity physical activity throughout the week. This includes doing muscle strengthening exercises 2 or more days per week.

It is especially important for older adults with poor mobility to be physically active at least 3 days per week to improve balance and help prevent falls.

Any physical activity is better than none. Start with small amounts and gradually increase the duration, frequency and intensity.

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*Always follow guidance from your healthcare professional in case of any health condition.*

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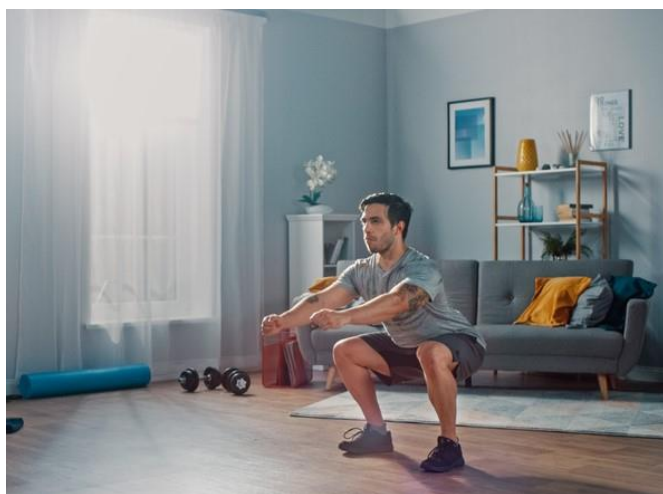
## HOW DO I STAY SAFE?

- **Do not exercise if you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing.** Stay home and rest. Seek medical attention and call in advance. Follow the directions and advice from your local health authority.
- **Always practice physical distancing and wash your hands.** If you are able to go for a walk or bicycle ride, maintain at least 2 meters or 6 feet of distance from others. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before you leave, when you reach your destination, and as soon as you get home. If water and soap are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol-based.
- **Do not use public outdoor play or exercise equipment.** If you are able to go out to public areas, follow the directions of your local health authority in regards to any restrictions on the number of people with you.
- **Gradually increase your level of physical activity to your tolerance.** Start slowly and with low intensity activities. Build up your endurance over time and pace yourself.
- **Choose the right activity and reduce the risk of injury.** Choose activities according to your health status and fitness level. A good rule of thumb – you should be able to breath and talk comfortably while you do light- and moderate-intensity physical activity.

## WHAT ACTIVITIES CAN I DO?

### LIMIT TIME SPENT SITTING

Every 20-30 minutes, take a short 3-5 minute break to get up and stretch, walk around the house, go up and down the stairs, or take a step outside to your garden, backyard or balcony. By simply changing positions and moving around, you can help relieve muscle tension and improve blood circulation.



### USE SPACE AROUND THE HOME

There are a lot of activities and exercises you can do at home that don't require any special equipment. As long as you give yourself enough space, you can achieve a full body workout. Dancing, doing jumping jacks and burpees are great for cardio and strength training. Exercises like planks, crunches, back extensions, push-ups, squats, and lunges use your own body weight as resistance and strengthen your core. Practicing meditation and yoga are other great options for exercising the mind and the body.

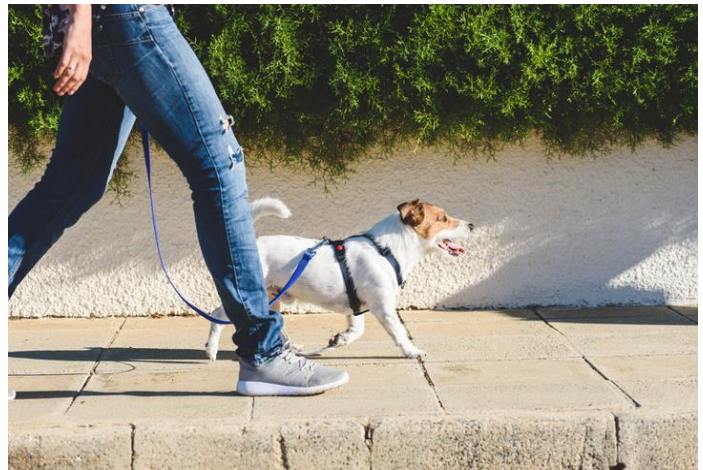


## JOIN AN ONLINE CLASS

Many gyms and studios are offering free online classes. It's a perfect opportunity to try new workouts and activities! Set aside some time to join a live stream class to ensure you get your daily dose! There are also plenty of free videos you can find online.

## GO OUT FOR WALKS OR BIKE RIDES

If you are able to go out to public areas, go for walks or rides while maintaining physical distance and following the rules set by your local health authority. Being out in nature also has added benefits for the mind and soul. This can be a way to relax, de-stress and get a change of scenery. Your furry friends would be grateful too!



## REFERENCES

PSHSA: [Healthy Worker](#)

PSHSA: [Benefits of Practicing Yoga](#)

Public Health Ontario: [COVID-19: Physical Distancing](#)

World Health Organization: [Be Active During COVID-19](#)

World Health Organization: [Stay Physically Active During Self-Quarantine](#)

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