

# “I exercise regularly, but how do I know if I am getting all that I need?”

Cardiorespiratory exercise, strength training, and flexibility are the three parts of a complete exercise program.



Each component supports the others to keep you as fit as possible. Always check with your doctor before beginning any exercise program.

## 1. Cardiorespiratory or aerobic exercise

The ability to move your body in a dynamic way using large muscle groups with moderate-to-high intensity over a long time.

- **Benefits:** Strengthens your heart muscle, increases your lung capacity, lubricates your joints and improves symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- **Types:** Walking, running, cycling, aerobics classes, swimming, hiking, jump roping, dancing, kayaking, snowshoeing.
- **Duration:** Aerobic exercise can be done seven days a week. Look to aim for two and one half hours of moderate-to-vigorous intensity each week. This translates to 30 minutes per day.
- **Intensity:** Use the ‘talk test’ to determine your intensity. You want to feel an increase in your heart rate, but you should still be able to talk in short sentences.

## 2. Strength training

A type of physical exercise that uses resistance to cause the muscles to contract, which in turn builds strength and endurance in the skeletal muscles.

- **Benefits:** Improves your ability to perform activities of daily living, reduces body fat by increasing lean muscle, decreases blood pressure and cholesterol, and lowers the risk for osteoporosis.
- **Types:** Resistance training with body weight, machines, free weights, tubing and bands.
- **Duration:** Strength training can be done two or three non-consecutive days per week. Always give your muscles at least one day of rest to help them heal and get stronger.
- **Intensity:** Begin with a weight that allows you to complete 8-12 repetitions with proper form. Begin to build up to two or three sets. When this is no longer challenging, either add more weight (between five and ten percent) or more repetitions to continue to progress.

## 3. Flexibility

Stretching that includes holding a position in place to a point where you feel mild discomfort, but never to the point of pain.

- **Benefits:** Improves range of motion, circulation, posture, balance; reduces the risk of injury, stress and back pain.
- **Types:** Yoga, static stretches held for a minimum of 30 seconds each.
- **Duration:** Every day, and especially after you finish your workout.

