

# Controlling your risk: Regular physical activity and good health

**Regular physical activity** can improve your health. It can help to prevent, delay, or control cancers, coronary heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and stroke.

## Start your program safely.

Check with your doctor before starting if you are

- 40 or older
- have a medical problem like bone or muscle disease, heart disease, or diabetes
- are obese.

Begin slowly to avoid injuring yourself. The recommended long term goal is at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity most days of the week.

Walking a 20 minute mile is a moderate pace. Your pace may be too fast if you

- cannot walk and talk. Slow down and see if it helps.
- are having trouble breathing. Stop and rest.
- are having pain or discomfort anywhere. Stop and rest. Stretch before starting next time.
- are dehydrated. Drink water before, during and after your activity.

Talk to your doctor about any problems or pains that don't disappear after a day or two of rest.

## Warm-Up, Cool-down

Choose comfortable clothes and footwear with support.

Every time you start an activity begin with a slow walk in place or some arm swinging for 5 minutes. After your muscles have warmed you can stretch them without risking injury.

Complete each stretch below or choose your own stretches. Hold each stretch for a count of 15, relax the muscle group and repeat the stretch for a total of 5 or more repetitions.

After your activity cool down by walking slowly for 5 minutes. Finish by stretching again.

