

## Adults with Disabilities

### Physical activity is for everybody



**3x**

Adults with disabilities are 3 times more likely to have heart disease, stroke, diabetes, or cancer than adults without disabilities.

**1 in 2**



Nearly half of all adults with disabilities get no aerobic physical activity, an important health behavior to help avoid these chronic diseases.



**82%**

Adults with disabilities were 82% more likely to be physically active if their doctor recommended it.

More than 21 million US adults 18–64 years of age have a disability. These are adults with serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs; hearing; seeing; or concentrating, remembering, or making decisions. Most adults with disabilities are able to participate in physical activity, yet nearly half of them get no aerobic physical activity. Physical activity benefits all adults, whether or not they have a disability, by reducing their risk of serious chronic diseases, such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and some cancers. Only 44% of adults with disabilities who visited a doctor in the past year were told by a doctor to get physical activity. Yet adults with disabilities were 82% more likely to be physically active if their doctor recommended it.

#### Doctors and other health professionals can:

- ◇ Ask adults with disabilities how much physical activity they get each week.
- ◇ Remind adults with disabilities to get regular physical activity consistent with their abilities. They should try to get at least 2 1/2 hours a week of moderate-intensity physical activity. If this is not possible, some activity is better than none.
- ◇ Recommend physical activity options that match the specific abilities of each person and connect them to resources that can help each person be physically active.

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Want to learn more? Visit

WWW

[www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/disabilities/](http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/disabilities/)



# Increasing physical activity among adults with disabilities

Doctors and other health professionals can use these steps to recommend aerobic physical activity options that match each person's specific abilities and connect him or her to resources that can help each person be physically active.



## 1. Know the Physical Activity Guidelines

The Physical Activity Guidelines are for everybody. [www.health.gov/paguidelines/guidelines/](http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/guidelines/)

Review the patient's charts before each visit.

Explain that adults of all shapes, sizes and abilities can benefit from being physically active.



Encourage at least 2½ hours a week of moderate-intensity physical activity.

## 2. Ask about physical activity

Remember to look beyond the disability and put the person first. Use terms such as "person with a disability" instead of "disabled" or "handicapped person".

How can you add more physical activity in your life?

What types of physical activity do you enjoy?

How much physical activity are you currently doing each week?

## 3. Discuss barriers to physical activity

Physical Barriers

## 4. Recommend physical activity options

Emotional Barriers

Describe physical activity options based on patient's abilities.



Brisk walking



Wheeling oneself in wheelchair



Swimming laps



Water aerobics



Hand-crank bicycle

## 5. Refer patient to resources and programs

Check-in with patient about his or her activity level at every visit.

Refer patient to resources and programs to help them begin or maintain their physical activity.

Remember to use the "teach-back" method to make sure patient understands the recommendations.



Wheelchair basketball, tennis, football, or softball

For resources: [www.cdc.gov/disabilities/PA](http://www.cdc.gov/disabilities/PA)