



Are Americans Exercising Enough? The Answer Might Surprise You...

What is the ONE thing that can reduce pain, improve function, diminish heart attacks, decrease memory loss, enhance mood, and add years to your life with very little risk? EXERCISE! So why is it that according to a new **CDC report**¹ that we reviewed in our [monthly journal club](#), only 23% of Americans aged 18 to 64 meet the government's recommended physical activity guidelines? That's shocking, right? Now depending on where people live, some are more likely to spend time working out than others. For example, people living in the West and New England are more likely to work out than those from the South. Though in our state of Arizona, still only 26.3% of adults get enough exercise. There are also significant differences between men and women, with just over 27% of men meeting the exercise guidelines compared to only 18.7% of the women.

Considering the shockingly low percentage of Americans meeting the government's recommendations for fitness leads me to wonder whether most Americans even know what these specific guidelines actually are. The current CDC guidelines published in 2008 that we will delve into follow other landmark publications on physical activity and health. In **1995**, the **CDC** and **American College of Sports Medicine** endorsed a public health recommendation to encourage increased participation in physical activity among Americans.² The consensus statement was that every US adult should accumulate 30 minutes or more of moderate-intensity physical activity on most, preferably all, days of the week. Then in **1996**, the **National Institutes of Health** published a consensus statement about physical activity and cardiovascular health.³ The conclusions were that all Americans should engage in regular physical activity with a goal of accumulating at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity on most, and preferably all, days of the week. In addition, they recommended that even those who were currently meeting these daily standards may derive additional health and fitness benefits by becoming more physically active including more vigorous activity.

Most recently, in **2008**, the **CDC** published **Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans**, science-based recommendations intended to help people improve health through appropriate physical activity.⁴ The following levels of physical activity were recommended:

- All adults should avoid inactivity. Some physical activity is better than none, and adults who participate in any amount of physical activity gain some health benefits.
- For substantial health benefits, adults should do at least 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) a week of moderate-intensity, or 75 minutes (1 hour and 15 minutes) a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity, or an equivalence combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic activity. Aerobic activity should be performed in episodes of at least 10 minutes, and preferably, it should be spread throughout the week.
- For additional and more extensive health benefits, adults should increase their aerobic physical activity to 300 minutes (5 hours) a week of moderate-intensity, or 150 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity, or an equivalence combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity activity.
- Adults also should do muscle-strengthening activities that are moderate- or high-intensity and involve all major muscle groups on 2 or more days a week.

So basically, healthy adults should do a minimum of 2 ½ hours of moderate intensity activity or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity plus at least two muscle strengthening days a week. Now if that sounds daunting, it is important to stress that aerobic activity can be performed in 10 minute increments. That's doable, right? Here are some tips to help you meet the CDC's bare minimum:

- **Aerobic:**
 - Take a 30-minute brisk walk or casual bike ride 5 days a week
 - If you don't have a 30-minute block of time, try three 10 minute blocks throughout the day
 - If you still don't have time, just do 75 minutes of vigorous activity – a good paced run, a swim, or a HIIT class counts
- **Strengthening:**
 - Do resistance training for the upper and lower extremity muscles 2 days a week
 - If you don't have access to a gym, you can do this at home with light weights, exercise bands and body-weight supported exercises

All it takes is 30 minutes a day. And if that sounds like a lot, know that it is worth the time. Evidence shows that the benefits of regular physical activity are clear and far outweigh the risk of adverse events. It is the biggest thing you can do to transform your physical and mental health. Note that it is advised to consult your primary medical doctor before beginning an exercise program. We here at [Desert Spine and Sports Physicians](#) are committed to help our patients meet and exceed these physical fitness guidelines. We are all skilled in performing [comprehensive musculoskeletal evaluations](#) to help develop exercise prescriptions tailored to our patients' individual needs. We also work with a team of physical therapists and athletic trainers in the community to help execute these programs, maintain adherence to home exercise programs, and when applicable, return patients to work and sports-specific activities. So now is the time to do it. Get up out of your chair and start moving!

Complete list of references on our website.

Location of Procedures

Desert Spine and Sports Physicians - Phoenix Office 3700 N. 24th Street, Suite 210 Phoenix, AZ 85016	Desert Spine and Sports Physicians - Mesa Office 6634 E. Baseline Rd., Suite 101 Mesa, AZ 85206	Desert Spine and Sports Physicians - Scottsdale Office 8670 E. Shea Blvd., Suite 102 Scottsdale, AZ 85260	Desert Spine and Sports Physicians - Peoria Office 13128 N. 94th Drive, Suite 200 Peoria, AZ 85381	Desert Spine and Sports Physicians - Gilbert Office 3615 S. Rome St. Gilbert, AZ 85297
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If you need to reschedule your appointment, please give 24 hours notice and call 602-840-0681.