

## ***ACSM Updates Physical Activity Recommendations***

It's been more than a decade since the initial guidelines for physical activity were jointly published by the American College of Sports (ACSM) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). **Unfortunately, Americans have continued to become less active over that duration** since slightly less than half of the population currently meets the minimum recommendations for daily/weekly physical activity. **This month ACSM and the American Heart Association (AHA) published updated physical activity recommendations** for both American Adults and Older Adults. Although the essential recommendations are relatively unchanged, **the update more clearly defines exercise duration and intensity to avoid misinterpretation by the general public.**

According to the new guidelines, American adults aged 18-65 years **should continue to accumulate at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity 5 days per week** (instead of "most days of the week") OR engage in 20-minutes of vigorous activity 3 days per week. **Specific examples based on Metabolic Equivalents (METs) are provided.** The update clarifies that activity must be at least 10 minutes in duration to count towards daily goals and that a combination of vigorous and moderate-intensity physical activity is acceptable. **Once again, strength training at least twice weekly is recommended. Programs should consist of 8-10 exercises for at least 1 set of 8-12 repetitions each.**

The update concludes that **the guidelines presented are "minimum" requirements** for preventing disease and strongly encourages American adults to strive for greater amounts of physical activity to gain advanced protection against **"inactivity-related chronic disease."**

The guidelines presented for older adults are nearly identical. **ACSM/AHA define the older adult as men and women over the age of 65 and includes those adults over age 50** with

clinically significant chronic conditions and/or functional limitations.

The older adult's recommendations for aerobic exercise **define moderate and vigorous activity based on perceived exertion in addition to METs**. Older adults are also encouraged to strength train a minimum of twice weekly. The older adult's strength program should include 8-10 exercises using 10-15 repetitions per exercise. **Although there is no specific recommendation for American Adults with respect to flexibility, the older adult is encouraged to maintain flexibility by stretching or other activity at least 10 minutes twice weekly**. The update includes a brief recommendation to include balance training, especially for those at risk for falls.

***Haskell, W.L. et al. (2007) Physical Activity and Public Health: Updated Recommendation for Adults from the American College of Sports Medicine and the American Heart Association. Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise. 39(8): 1423-1434.***

***Nelson, M.E. et al (2007) Physical Activity and Public Health in Older Adults: Recommendation from the American College of Sports Medicine and the American Heart Association. Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise. 39(8): 1435-1445.***