

FITNESS FOR ALL AGES:

EMBRACING MOVEMENT FOR LIFELONG HEALTH

by Roger Adams, PhD



Fitness is important for health and well-being at any age, body size or ability. Regular physical activity boosts physical, mental, emotional and social health. By choosing fun, adaptable and safe activities, fitness can become a lifelong journey. Celebrate your body's ability to move and perform everyday physical activities, no matter how small.



CHILDREN (AGES 5-12)

For children, fitness should be about play and fun. Structured or rule-heavy exercise might discourage them from moving, so keep things light-hearted. Active play helps kids develop healthy habits early on, supporting physical, emotional and social growth.

KEY ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN:

OUTDOOR PLAY: Games like tag, hide and seek, or running around the playground boost heart health and social skills. Parents can join or organize community activity groups.

SWIMMING: Swimming provides a full-body workout, improves heart health and is gentle on growing bodies. Lessons also build water confidence.

BIKING: Riding bikes, scooters and skateboards help with balance, leg strength and coordination. Always wear helmets for safety, and consider family biking outings for extra fun.

TEAM SPORTS: Sports like soccer or basketball build muscles, teamwork skills and confidence. Choose activities with lots of movement and varied motions.

DANCE: Dance classes or dance parties at home improve coordination, heart health and let kids express themselves through movement.

Children need daily opportunities to move their bodies. Short, fun activities like morning stretches or family walks can nurture a lifelong love of movement.

TEENAGERS (AGES 13-19)

Teens often face challenges staying active due to school, social pressures and distractions like screens. However, regular exercise is crucial for both their physical and mental health.

RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES FOR TEENS:

RUNNING OR JOGGING: Running helps teens stay fit, reduce stress and boost body image. Start small with short distances and gradually build endurance. Joining a running club or track team can provide structure and motivation.

STRENGTH TRAINING: Weightlifting and bodyweight exercises build muscle, strengthen bones and boost metabolism. Start with exercises like push-ups, squats and planks before moving to weights. Proper form is crucial to prevent injuries.

TEAM SPORTS: Joining school or community teams offers fitness, fun and social interaction. Sports like basketball, soccer and volleyball are great for fitness and developing social skills.

YOGA: Yoga improves flexibility, mind-body connection and reduces stress. It can be done anywhere, from home to yoga studios.

Encourage teens to set aside time for regular exercise or sports. Exploring different activities helps them find what they enjoy and sets the stage for a lifetime of healthy habits.



ADULTS (AGES 20-64)

For adults, fitness helps manage stress, maintain a healthy weight and prevent chronic diseases. Finding activities that match your fitness level and interests is key to keeping exercise enjoyable and consistent.

POPULAR ACTIVITIES FOR ADULTS:

WALKING: Walking is a low-impact and adaptable exercise that supports health and reduces stress. Make it part of your daily routine and explore local parks or trails for added enjoyment.

GYM WORKOUTS: Gyms offer focused fitness environments. A balanced routine of cardio, weightlifting and flexibility exercises can improve overall health. Personal trainers can help guide you toward your goals while ensuring proper form for your safety.

GROUP FITNESS CLASSES: Classes like Zumba, spin or aerobics provide motivation and social interaction. Many gyms offer a variety of options to fit your schedule and preferences.

SWIMMING: Swimming is a full-body workout that's easy on the joints, improving strength and flexibility. Check out local pools or aquatic centers for lap swimming and water aerobics.

YOGA OR PILATES: These practices improve flexibility, core strength and mental well-being. They can be done at home with online videos or in studio classes.

Regular exercise is key. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity weekly, plus muscle-strengthening exercises on two or more days. Mixing up your routine keeps things fun and engaging.

OLDER ADULTS (AGES 65+)

For older adults, fitness is crucial for maintaining mobility, independence and mental health. Focus on activities that support balance, flexibility and strength.

GREAT OPTIONS FOR OLDER ADULTS:

WALKING: Walking remains a low-impact and adaptable way to support heart health and social interaction. Adjust your pace and distance based on comfort.

WATER AEROBICS: This low-impact activity provides resistance training without joint strain, improving strength and flexibility. Many community pools offer classes for older adults.

TAI CHI: This gentle martial art improves balance, coordination and focus, helping reduce the risk of falls. It can be practiced alone or in groups.

STRENGTH TRAINING: Building muscle helps maintain bone health and prevents conditions like osteoporosis. Work on major muscle groups two to three times a week with professional guidance for safety.

STRETCHING OR YOGA: These activities improve flexibility and mobility, reduce stiffness and promote relaxation.

If you're new to exercise, start with low-intensity activities and gradually build up. Always consult your healthcare provider to ensure the exercises are safe and tailored to your needs.

EMBRACE FITNESS FOR LIFE

Fitness is a lifelong journey that benefits everyone, no matter their age. By choosing enjoyable, adaptable and safe activities, you can find exercises that enrich your life. Whether you're a child running at the park, a teen playing sports, an adult working out at the gym or an older adult walking with friends, fitness is for everyone. Embrace the journey and enjoy the countless rewards of staying active.

About the Author:

Roger E. Adams, PhD, CISSN, ACE-CPT, is a weight-loss and fitness expert with more than 25 years in private practice. He is the founder and chief nutritionist of *eatrightfitness*®, an international evidence-based consulting practice focusing on weight-loss and sports performance in Hudson, Ohio. Dr. Adams is also the Co-founder and Director of Education for the Global Performance Nutrition Institute (GPNI) and teaches sports nutrition classes worldwide. He is a proud and active member of the American Council on Exercise (ACE), the Academy for Nutrition and Dietetics (AND) and the Obesity Action Coalition (OAC). You can reach him at roger@eatrightfitness.com or visit his website at eatrightfitness.com for a free consultation.



ABOUT THE OBESITY ACTION COALITION (OAC)

The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is a National non-profit organization dedicated to giving a voice to individuals affected by obesity and helping them along their journey toward better health. Our core focuses are to elevate the conversation of weight and its impact on health, improve access to obesity care, provide science-based education on obesity and its treatments, and fight to eliminate weight bias and discrimination.



VIBRANT COMMUNITY



NATIONAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS



ANNUAL CONVENTION



ADVOCACY



PUBLIC EDUCATION

LEARN, CONNECT, ENGAGE

The OAC knows that the journey with weight can be challenging but we also know that great things happen when we learn, connect and engage. That is why the OAC Community exists. Our Community is designed to provide quality education, ongoing support programs, an opportunity to connect, and a place to take action on important issues.

Through the OAC Community, you can get access to:

- Weight & Health Education • Community Blogs
 - Community Discussion Forum
 - Ongoing Support • Meaningful Connections
- AND MUCH MORE**



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