

## **What is physical activity?**

- Physical activity is any form of exercise or movement of the body that uses energy.
  - Some of your daily life activities—doing active chores around the house, yard work, walking the dog—are examples.
  - To get the health benefits of physical activity, include activities that make you breathe harder and make your heart and blood vessels healthier.
  - These aerobic activities include things like brisk walking, running, dancing, swimming, and playing basketball.
  - Also include strengthening activities to make your muscles stronger, like push-ups and lifting weights.

## **Benefits of physical activity:**

- Physical activity is essential for healthy growth and development. Regular physical activity in childhood develops cardiovascular fitness, strength and bone density.
- Better academic scores, increased concentration, improved self-esteem, lower stress levels, better posture and balance, opportunities to socialize
- Physical activity has been shown to reduce the risk of over 25 chronic conditions, including coronary heart disease, stroke, hypertension, breast cancer, colon cancer, Type 2 diabetes and osteoporosis.
- Weight-bearing physical activity reduces the rate of bone loss associated with osteoporosis.
- Regular physical activity maintains strength and flexibility, balance and coordination, and can help reduce the risk of falls.

## **Build up over time:**

- Start by doing what you can, and then look for ways to do more.
- If you have not been active for a while, start out slowly.
- After several weeks or months, build up your activities—do them longer and more often.
- Walking is one way to add physical activity to your life.
  - When you first start, walk 10 minutes a day on a few days during the first couple of weeks. Add more time and days. Walk a little longer. Try 15 minutes instead of 10 minutes. Then walk on more days a week. Pick up the pace. Once this is easy to do, try walking faster. Keep up your brisk walking for a couple of months. You might want to add biking on the weekends for variety.

## **Physical Activity Ideas:**

General Cleaning	Biking	Dancing	Water Aerobics	Skiing
Shoveling Snow	Sit-ups	Work with Resistance Bands		Push-ups
Yoga	Workout DVD/YouTube video		Walking	Climbing Stairs
Squats	Dumbbell Exercises	Balances	Stretches	Carrying groceries
Skating	Recreational Sport	Intramurals		