

# WIN

Weight-control Information Network

# Getting on Track

Physical Activity and Healthy Eating for Men



**NIDDK** | NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF  
DIABETES AND DIGESTIVE  
AND KIDNEY DISEASES

# Getting on Track

## Physical Activity and Healthy Eating for Men

### **INTRODUCTION**

Take a minute to think about your weight, health, and lifestyle. Are you as fit and healthy as you would like to be? Do you think you might be carrying a little too much weight or body fat?

You can get on track with regular physical activity and healthy eating habits. By making small changes to your lifestyle, you may become leaner and more energetic.

Keep reading for tips on how to get on track with healthy habits—chances are, you will find that it is not as hard as you thought.

### WHAT IS A HEALTHY WEIGHT?

Body mass index (BMI) is a tool that is often used to determine if a person is a healthy weight, overweight, or obese, and whether a person's health is at risk due to his or her weight. BMI is a ratio of your weight to your height. You can refer to the chart on the next page to find your BMI and see what a healthy weight range is for your height.

A BMI of 18.5 to 24.9 is considered healthy. A person with a BMI of 25 to 29.9 is considered overweight, and a person with a BMI of 30 or more is considered obese.

Another way to determine if your health is at risk because of your weight is to measure your waist. Waist measurement does not tell if you are overweight, but it does show if you have excess fat in your stomach. You should know that extra fat around your waist may raise your health risks even more than fat elsewhere on your body. Also, men are more likely than women to carry their extra weight around their stomach.

Men whose waists measure more than 40 inches may be at an increased risk for diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke, and other problems.

A downside of using BMI is that it does not take into account whether body weight is due to muscle or fat. Therefore, someone who is very muscular may be thought to have excess fat, even if he has low or normal body fat. For the vast majority of Americans, though, BMI is a good way to tell if you have increased health risks due to your weight.

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**TABLE 1: BODY MASS INDEX**

	NORMAL						OVERWEIGHT					OBESE										EXTREME OBESITY		
BMI	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42
Height (Feet-Inches)	Weight (Pounds)																							
4' 10"	91	96	100	105	110	115	119	124	129	134	138	143	148	153	158	162	167	172	177	181	186	191	196	201
4' 11"	94	99	104	109	114	119	124	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	173	178	183	188	193	198	203	208
5' 00"	97	102	107	112	118	123	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	174	179	184	189	194	199	204	209	215
5' 01"	100	106	111	116	122	127	132	137	143	148	153	158	164	169	174	180	185	190	195	201	206	211	217	222
5' 02"	104	109	115	120	126	131	136	142	147	153	158	164	169	175	180	186	191	196	202	207	213	218	224	229
5' 03"	107	112	118	124	130	135	141	146	152	158	163	169	174	180	186	191	197	203	208	214	220	225	231	237
5' 04"	110	116	122	128	134	140	145	151	157	163	169	175	180	186	191	197	204	209	215	221	227	232	238	244
5' 05"	114	120	126	132	138	144	150	156	162	168	174	180	186	192	198	204	210	216	222	228	234	240	246	252
5' 06"	118	124	130	136	142	148	155	161	167	173	179	186	192	198	204	210	216	223	229	235	241	247	253	260
5' 07"	121	127	134	140	146	153	159	166	172	178	185	191	198	204	211	217	223	230	236	242	249	255	261	268
5' 08"	125	131	138	144	151	158	164	171	177	184	190	197	204	210	216	223	230	236	243	249	256	262	269	276
5' 09"	128	135	142	149	155	162	169	176	182	189	196	203	210	216	223	230	236	243	250	257	263	270	277	284
5' 10"	132	139	146	153	160	167	174	181	188	195	202	209	216	222	229	236	243	250	257	264	271	278	285	292
5' 11"	136	143	150	157	165	172	179	186	193	200	208	215	222	229	236	243	250	257	265	272	279	286	293	301
6' 00"	140	147	154	162	169	177	184	191	199	206	213	221	228	235	242	250	258	265	272	279	287	294	302	309
6' 01"	144	151	159	166	174	182	189	197	204	212	219	227	235	242	250	257	265	275	280	288	295	302	310	318
6' 02"	148	155	163	171	179	186	194	202	210	218	225	233	241	249	256	264	272	280	287	295	303	311	319	326
6' 03"	152	160	168	176	184	192	200	208	216	224	232	240	248	256	264	272	279	287	295	303	311	319	327	335
6' 04"	156	164	172	180	189	197	205	213	221	230	238	246	254	263	271	279	287	295	304	312	320	328	336	344

Adapted from: George Bray, Pennington Biomedical Research Center; *Clinical Guidelines on the Identification, Evaluation, and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults: The Evidence Report*, National Institutes of Health, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, September 1998.

### WHY DO WEIGHT AND LIFESTYLE MATTER?

Being overweight, obese, or physically inactive may increase your risk for:

- coronary heart disease
- type 2 diabetes
- high blood pressure
- stroke
- some types of cancer, including colorectal and kidney cancer

On the other hand, being active, eating healthier, and achieving and staying at a healthy weight may help:

- Improve mood and energy levels.
- Increase fitness and strength.
- Improve muscles.

## GETTING FIT

Pick an activity that you enjoy and will do. This activity should get your heart and breathing rates up, but is not so tiring that you cannot talk while doing it.

### TYPES OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

#### Moderate Intensity

- brisk walking
- weight training
- recreational swimming

#### Vigorous Intensity

- jogging
- fast-paced sports, like football

## TIPS FOR GETTING FIT

- Start with a level of activity that feels doable and gradually increase the frequency, time, and intensity of your exercise. You might begin with 10 minutes of daily activity for the first week, for example, and then increase your time to 15 minutes a day the next week.
- Work up to an amount of activity that allows you to reach your goal. It may be 45 minutes a day or it may be 90 minutes a day.
- Activities like chores, walking up stairs, and playing outside with the kids count too.
- Remember, you do not have to do 30 minutes of exercise all at once to be healthy. Instead, you can take three 10-minute walks throughout the day.

Visit the “MyPyramid” website from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to find out how you can estimate the amounts of exercise and food you need. Enter your age, gender, weight, and current activity level to receive a personalized physical activity and eating plan. It is available at <http://www.mypyramid.gov>.

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## EXERCISE YOUR OPTIONS

To get on track and stay on track, you should try different types of exercises and activities. The chart below lists several types of physical activity, provides examples of each, and describes how each activity is good for you.

ACTIVITY	EXAMPLES	POTENTIAL BENEFITS
Aerobic Exercise	Walking, jogging, swimming, biking	Improves fitness, burns calories, aids in weight loss, improves mental well-being
Strength Training	Weight machines, free weights, crunches, push-ups	Improves strength, increases muscle size, burns calories, aids in weight loss
Flexibility/ Stretching	Traditional stretching, yoga, Tai Chi	Reduces injury risk, improves blood flow, helps recovery from muscle soreness
Sports	Basketball, racquetball, tennis, golf (if you walk the course)	Improves fitness, strength, and coordination; burns calories; adds variety
Lifestyle Activities	Washing the car, taking the stairs, mowing the lawn	Burns some calories and reduces health risks

Most men can safely increase their physical activity without consulting a health care professional, but men over age 40 and those with a history of coronary heart disease or diabetes should speak with a health care professional before starting a vigorous exercise program.

### A HEALTHY EATING PLAN = A VARIETY OF FOODS

- whole grains
- vegetables
- fruits
- lean meats and seafood
- low-fat or fat-free milk products



### EATING SMART

- Eating smart may improve your health and your waistline.
- You can also improve your eating habits by adjusting portion sizes and still enjoy delicious foods and an occasional treat.

### EASY TIPS FOR EATING SMART

- Sneak in fruits and vegetables. Add berries to your cereal or crunchy vegetables to your sandwich.
- Be aware of what you drink as well as what you eat. Sodas, sports drinks, and juices may be high in caffeine or calories, especially from sugar.

- Do not overdo it with alcohol. Alcohol can be a major source of hidden calories. A single shot of liquor, about 2 ounces, has about 125 calories. A 5-ounce glass of wine or a 12-ounce glass of beer has 160 calories.

### KEEPING PORTIONS UNDER CONTROL

In addition to *what* you eat, *how much* you eat also affects your weight. The pictures on the next page give you an idea of what portion sizes look like for some foods. Try to “eyeball” your portion sizes using everyday objects—it may help you control how many calories you consume.



Pay attention to the  
serving sizes  
listed on Nutrition Facts labels.

For example, the label  
on a loaf of bread  
may list nutritional information  
for one slice.

But if you eat two slices  
in a sandwich, you have  
eaten double the calories,  
fat, and other nutrients.

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## Serving Sizes = Everyday Objects

1 cup of cereal = a fist	
1/2 cup of cooked rice, pasta, or potato = 1/2 baseball	
1 baked potato = a fist	
1 medium fruit = a baseball	
1/2 cup of fresh fruit = 1/2 baseball	
1 1/2 ounces of low-fat or fat-free cheese = 4 stacked dice	
1/2 cup of ice cream = 1/2 baseball	
2 tablespoons of peanut butter = a ping-pong ball	

Eating slowly or eating from a smaller plate may help you control how much you eat. Before you reach for a second helping, stop and ask yourself if you are still truly hungry. When you eat out, try splitting a meal or dessert with a friend or significant other, or taking half of your meal home in a take-out container. You may save big on calories, and it is tough to beat two meals for the price of one.





## ACHIEVING YOUR GOALS

### Set the Course

Focus on what you want to achieve in the short-term and over the long run. An example of a short-term goal might be to replace soda with water for a week. A good long-term goal might be to walk or run at least three times a week in preparation for an upcoming charity walk or fun run.

### Expect Roadblocks

Everyone runs into roadblocks sometimes, so expect them, think of ways to overcome them, and get back on your feet if they set you back. Common roadblocks include:

- loss of motivation
- lack of time
- an upcoming vacation

To manage or overcome a setback:

- Find a workout partner to boost your motivation.
- Try exercising at lunch if you are short on time in the evening.

### Chart Your Progress

To track your efforts, simply jot down your physical activity or healthy eating choices for the day in a small notebook. Several websites also offer online physical activity and nutrition trackers for this purpose. See the “Additional Resources” section at the end of the brochure for more information about these websites.



Goals should be realistic and specific, so set yours carefully.

Running a marathon is likely not the best goal for someone just starting to get in shape.

Similarly, a goal such as

“eating healthier”

may not be helpful

because it is too vague.

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### Stay Motivated

Setting goals may boost your motivation to eat smart and stay active. But you may need more sources of inspiration—so set rewards along with your goals. Examples might be new workout clothing after you complete a week of regular workouts, or buying a new CD when you lose 5 pounds.

Finally, try asking friends or family members to join you in eating healthier and being more active. Healthy choices become easier when everyone is working toward similar goals.

### THE BIG PICTURE

Being more active and eating better are two of the best ways you can take care of yourself. Other ways to improve your physical and mental health include:

- Getting adequate sleep.
- Quitting smoking.
- Reducing alcohol intake.

By rewarding yourself with a fit and healthy lifestyle, you are taking control of your future and setting an example that your family and friends can follow. That is really something to take pride in.

\* Participants in clinical trials can play a more active role in their own health care, gain access to new research treatments before they are widely available, and help others by contributing to medical research. For more information about current studies, visit <http://www.ClinicalTrials.gov>.



## **ADDITIONAL READING FROM THE WEIGHT-CONTROL INFORMATION NETWORK**

*Just Enough for You: About Food Portions* • August 2006

*Tips to Help You Get Active* • April 2006

*Weight Loss for Life* • July 2006

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

American Heart Association

Just Move

This website features a free online  
physical activity tracker.

Internet: <http://www.justmove.org>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Health Information for Men

These web pages offer information on a variety of men's health topics.

Internet: <http://www.cdc.gov/men>

Phone: 1-800-311-3435

National Diabetes Education Program

Diabetes and Obesity Information

The National Diabetes Education Program

provides information and offers a recipe and meal planner guide.

Internet: <http://www.ndep.nih.gov>

Phone: (301) 496-3583

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

Aim for a Healthy Weight

This website includes a "Portion Distortion" quiz and BMI assessment tool.

Internet: [http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose\\_wt](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose_wt)

Phone: (301) 592-8573

U.S. Department of Agriculture

MyPyramid

This interactive website has in-depth dietary and physical activity recommendations and information.

Internet: <http://www.mypyramid.gov>

Phone: 1-888-7-Pyramid; 1-888-779-7264

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

*2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*

This website provides helpful information and recommendations for fitting physical activity into your life.

Internet: <http://www.health.gov/PAGuidelines>

*Inclusion of resources is for information only and does not imply endorsement by NIDDK or WIN.*



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Publications produced by WIN are reviewed by both NIDDK scientists and outside experts. This publication was also reviewed by John M. Jakicic, Ph.D., Chair, Department of Health and Physical Activity, and Director, Physical Activity and Weight Management Research Center, University of Pittsburgh.

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