



PCNA

**Preventive Cardiovascular
Nurses Association**

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PCNA Position Statement on Physical Activity

The Issue

Only 64.5% of American adults report that they meet the current guidelines for regular physical activity of at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity 5 or more days per week or > 20 minutes of vigorous activity 3 or more days per week. The proportion of youth meeting the recommended physical activity level is even lower. Only 34.7% of students in grades 9 through 12 report that they meet current physical activity guidelines of ≥ 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity on most days of the week. Physical activity is higher in males compared to females and declines with age.

The Facts

Research has shown that regular physical activity has numerous health benefits:

- Lower risk of premature death
- Lower risk of coronary heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, metabolic syndrome, colon cancer, and breast cancer
- Improved blood pressure and blood lipids control
- Prevention of weight gain
- Weight loss, particularly when combined with reduced calorie intake
- Improved cardio respiratory and muscular fitness
- Prevention of falls
- Reduced depression
- Better cognitive function for older adults

Implications

The economic consequences of physical inactivity are great. We as health professionals need to individualize exercise plans for our patients. If we could assist sedentary persons begin a low-level physical activity program while also targeting that middle 50% of Americans doing some but not enough exercise and assist them to increase their exercise programs, a huge impact would be made on our society and on the health care dollar. PCNA provides education and educational materials to professionals and is committed to targeting the physical inactivity problem.

PCNA supports the US Department of Health and Human Services recommendations that adults obtain at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity, or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity, or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity physical activity. Aerobic activity should be performed in episodes of at least 10 minutes and

preferably spread throughout the week. For additional health benefits, adults should increase their aerobic physical activity to 300 minutes a week of moderate intensity, or 150 minutes a week of vigorous intensity aerobic physical activity, or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity activity. Furthermore, adults should also perform muscle-strengthening activities that are moderate or high intensity and involve all major muscle groups on 2 or more days a week. Children and adolescents should perform 60 minutes or more of moderate- to vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity daily. Muscle-strengthening and bone-strengthening activities should be included at least 3 days a week

Conclusion

PCNA recommends for the public:

- Regular physical activity for all Americans
- Physical activity programs tailored to the individual to improve adherence, e.g., *Be Active Your Way—A Guide for Adults*
<http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/adultguide/activeguide.aspx>

PCNA recommends that all health professionals:

- Implement national guidelines for physical activity through the use of PCNA tools
- Assist patients to set target goals for physical activity at each visit

References

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. <http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/default.aspx>