

INCREASING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

How Much Activity Do Youth Need?

Physical activity improves **both** physical and mental health. Youth, ages 6+ benefit from at least **60 minutes** of aerobic physical activity **5–6 days per week**.

What Types of Activity Are Best?



Aerobic: running, swimming, biking, dancing, or walking for at least **60 minutes 5–6 days per week**



Muscle-strengthening: using resistance bands, climbing stairs, dancing, biking, lifting weights, doing push-ups, squats, and sit-ups at least **3 days per week**



Bone-strengthening: running, jumping rope, or doing an activity that involves rapid changes in movement at least **3 days per week**

Mental Health Benefits from Physical Activity

Lower levels of depression and anxiety

Increased levels of confidence, self-esteem, and body acceptance

Provides opportunities to connect with others and learn life skills

Improved ability to concentrate, learn, and sleep



What Works for Increasing Youth Physical Activity?

Promote physical activity options that youth will enjoy. Both structured (e.g., team sports, programs) and unstructured options (e.g. going for a walk, playing pickup) are valuable.

Lead by example – adults can model physical activity by prioritizing it and making it a part of their routine.

Promote movement in everyday activities like taking the stairs, walking the dog, biking or walking to school or other activities.

Provide non-competitive physical activity programs /options that youth can do just for fun.

Host gatherings or plan trips to places like public parks, trails, community fields, or basketball, tennis, pickleball, or volleyball courts.

Link physical activity with other youth interests (e.g. hiking and photography, going for a walk with friends).

Ensure youth have protective equipment such as helmets, and/or elbow and knee pads for activities involving wheels, heights, and speed.

Encourage young people to try new ways of being physically active to learn what they enjoy.