Healthy physical activity

2015 is here, and it’s time to commit (or recommit) to healthy habits. The right amount of physical activity can have a huge impact on our lives. The Centers for Disease Control states that adults who engage in regular physical activity are less likely to develop type 2 diabetes, heart disease and other health problems.

Worried that it’s “too late” to start exercising? Don’t be. People of every age benefit from physical activity.

How much exercise do we need? The CDC recommends the following activity levels for healthy people:

**Children between the ages of 6 and 17** should enjoy 60 minutes of physical activity every day. Children also need to participate in vigorous physical activity (such as running), bone-building exercises (such as jumping rope) and muscle-building activities (such as push-ups) three days a week.

**For adults and seniors,** the recommended physical activity levels depend on the intensity of the activity. The CDC recommends 2.5 hours of moderate exercise (such as walking), plus two sessions of muscle strengthening activities that address all major muscle groups every week.

**Adults who prefer to engage in vigorous exercises,** such as running, should aim for 75 minutes of activity per week, plus two sessions of muscle strengthening exercises. If you prefer to combine vigorous and moderate exercise each week and adjust your times accordingly, go ahead!

**Women who are pregnant, as well as individuals who have health challenges,** should speak to their doctors before beginning an exercise program.

 Prayer: Dear God, thank you for the gift of my body. Help me to mindfully care for myself so that I can be all that you have created me to be. Amen.

**Exercise: How to get started**

Out of shape and don’t want to be? It’s time to get moving. Fortunately, there are a lot of options for people who are new to exercise or out of practice.

**Find activities that you enjoy.**

There are dozens of healthy activities and exercise, many of which do not require special equipment or joining a gym. But find something you like to do and you are more likely to stick with it.

**Don’t panic about the time commitment.**

Being busy doesn’t have to keep you from participating in healthy physical activity. According to the Centers for Disease Control, it is just fine if you exercise in small time chunks. In fact, mini exercise periods as short as ten minutes each are effective – and add up!

**Set goals and stay accountable.**

Your physician can help you set reasonable health and fitness goals. Here are some ideas for monitoring your progress and staying accountable:

➢ Wear a pedometer or fitness tracker, and set a daily goal.
➢ Weigh and measure yourself regularly. Take body measurements once a month for extra inspiration.
➢ Ask someone to become your workout buddy.
➢ Join a class. Many people find that they are more likely to stick with an exercise program if someone else is setting the pace and providing encouragement.
➢ Just move! Park further from the store. During commercials, stand up and stretch. Whenever you can, use your feet instead of your car. While talking on the phone, stand. Don’t just *wait* for an elevator; walk around!

Add more physical activity to 2015.