Getting Active Following a STROKE

Being active is key to preventing stroke. It’s best if you’re active at least 30 minutes each day. But this doesn’t have to be at a gym. Physical activity includes anything that gets your heart rate up and burns calories. If you have trouble moving around, your doctor may prescribe physical therapy.

Benefits of Physical Activity
- Improves your mood and helps you think clearer.
- Helps control your appetite.
- Helps you lose weight or maintain a healthy weight.
- Lowers your blood pressure.
- Increases levels of “good” cholesterol.
- Helps control blood sugar by enhancing how your body uses insulin.

Ways to Get Moving
After a stroke, you may not be able to do everything you used to, but there are still simple ways you can stay active. The key is finding things that fit your lifestyle and abilities.
- Rake leaves or work in the garden.
- Play with children or grandchildren.
- Work on a hobby.
- Sweep or vacuum your living space.
- Try stretching exercises or swimming.
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How to Exercise Well
Don’t worry. You don’t need to be an athlete to get the benefits of physical activity. You don’t even need to get all of your activity at once. Aside from traditional forms of exercise, healthy physical activity can include:

- Parking farther away from your destination to walk a bit more.
- Taking the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Taking your dog out for a stroll.
- Walking instead of driving.

Walk Every Day
Walking is great exercise. It’s free, easy, and all you need is a good pair of shoes. Start with short walks. Then go a little farther each week. The tips below can help:

- Warm up. Start off with a few minutes of strolling. Then walk at a brisker pace.
- Walk every chance you get. Walk to do errands, for fun or to visit friends. Visit a local park or explore your neighborhood.
- Take a friend along. Having company can make it more fun.
- Walk farther each week. Try walking a little farther or longer each week. You may be surprised by how fast you improve.

You should stop walking right away if you:
- Have trouble breathing.
- Feel dizzy or extremely tired.
- Have sharp pain.

If you’re new to exercising, it’s normal to feel a little sore afterward.

Stick With It
Some days it may seem hard to be active, but plan ways to keep going anyway. Make a list of things that might keep you from exercising. Then write down what you can do to get around those things.

How much exercise do you need?
To get the greatest benefits from physical activity, the American Heart Association recommends the following:

- Get at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week, or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise per week. You can also do a combination of moderate and vigorous activity.
- Break the minutes down into 30-minutes segments, five times a week.
- Or divide your time throughout the day with two or three segments of 10 to 15 minutes per day.

Always check with your physician before beginning a physical activity program.