The simple answer is both. Physical fitness is the ability of your body to carry out daily tasks with minimal effort. With better physical fitness comes more energy and less pain and discomfort throughout the day. To achieve optimal health, you should include exercises that focus on the four physical fitness areas: aerobic fitness, muscular fitness, flexibility, and body composition.

Aerobic fitness helps your body use the oxygen you breathe for energy and strengthens your heart.

Muscular fitness aids your muscles’ abilities to perform tasks.

Flexibility enhances the movement of your joints and the ability of your muscles to stretch through an entire range of motion.

Body composition refers to the fat tissue to lean tissue ratio. Too much body fat puts you at risk for developing many health problems, including heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and high blood pressure.

All four areas of physical fitness are interrelated. Walking, a primarily aerobic activity, is a great example. However, your ability to walk depends on your muscular fitness and the flexibility of your hips. If you have greater hip and leg strength, your body may carry you farther and faster without losing your breath. If your body composition is made up of a small amount of fat, there is less weight to carry along with you.

What Is Aerobic Exercise?
Aerobic exercise involves any activity that makes your heart and lungs work harder than they do during regular daily activities. Most aerobic exercise keeps your whole body moving in a continuous and rhythmic manner. Examples include walking, biking, dancing, skating, and rowing.

As a result of regular aerobic exercise, your heart, lungs, and blood vessels function more efficiently and it is easier for your heart to pump blood and oxygen to the active parts of your body. This will give you more stamina.

Aerobic training can have many health benefits, including lower blood pressure, reduced risk of heart disease and diabetes, improved mood, increased energy level, better sleep, and higher self-esteem.

What Is Strength Training?
Strength training typically involves weight lifting or the use of training machines and equipment. It used to be something only athletes did, but not anymore. Strength training has many benefits as part of a fitness program.

Strength training keeps bones strong and allows for a physically active lifestyle along with more energy and less risk of injury. Increased muscular strength and endurance can also result from strength training. This can lead to the ability to work longer before tiring, increased bone strength, and improved balance.

Training Programs for Health
To achieve the optimal health benefits of training,
150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity, 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity, or a combination of the two should be performed per week. For strength training, all major muscle groups should be worked twice a week, with at least one rest day. At least one set of each exercise should be performed using a weight or resistance heavy enough to exhaust muscles after 12 to 15 repetitions. (Keep in mind that these are the minimum recommendations in order to live a healthy, active lifestyle.) If you are not familiar with strength training, seek the advice of a certified personal trainer or an exercise specialist for proper techniques and workloads.

### Examine Your Choices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXERCISE</th>
<th>WHAT I DO NOW</th>
<th>WHAT I PLAN TO CHANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Add weight training to my routine</td>
<td>Walk 30 minutes 2 or 3 days a week</td>
<td>Add light weight training 2 days a week for 15 to 30 minutes during lunchtime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance my strength training routine</td>
<td>Engage in 30 minutes of aerobic activity 5 to 7 days a week and some strength training</td>
<td>Use free weights or weight machines for 30 to 60 minutes 2 days a week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### MY GOAL:

### Sources


Laskowski, Edward R. "How much should the average adult exercise every day?" https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/fitness/expertanswers/exercise/faq-20057916.

Updated by Nicolete Vincent, intern. Reviewed and edited by Lynn James, senior extension educator.

Originally prepared by Heather Baranoski, certified wellness coach. Revised by Laurie Welch, extension educator, Clinton County.

extension.psu.edu

Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences research and extension programs are funded in part by Pennsylvania counties, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Where trade names appear, no discrimination is intended, and no endorsement by Penn State Extension is implied.

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

Penn State is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer, and is committed to providing employment opportunities to all qualified applicants without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability or protected veteran status.

Produced by Ag Communications and Marketing © The Pennsylvania State University 2019

Code UK146 3/19pod