

# Walk NEBRASKA

## New Physical Activity Guidelines Established

The first thorough review of scientific research about physical activity and health in more than a decade has resulted in the development of an extensive set of guidelines from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. “It’s important for all Americans to be active, and the guidelines are a roadmap to include physical activity in the daily routine,” said HHS Secretary, Mike Leavitt. According to Leavitt, “the evidence is clear – regular physical activity over months and years produces long-term health benefits and reduces the risk of many diseases. The more physically active you are, the more health benefits you gain.” Here are key guidelines for several groups:

- Adults gain substantial health benefits from two and one half hours per week of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity. Walking briskly, water aerobics, ballroom dancing and general gardening are examples of moderate aerobic activities. These should be performed in episodes of at least 10 minutes. For more extensive health benefits, adults should increase their moderate aerobic activity to five hours a week or two and one-half hours of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity such as jogging or running, swimming laps, or jumping rope. Adults should also incorporate muscle strengthening activities such as weight training, push-ups, sit-ups or heavy gardening, at least two days a week.
- Older adults should follow the guidelines for other adults when it is within their physical capacity. If they are at risk for falling, they should do exercises that maintain or improve balance.
- Adults with disabilities should also get at least two and one-half hours of moderate aerobic activity a week if they are able, or one hour and 15 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity. They should incorporate muscle-strengthening activities involving all major muscle groups two or more days a week.

The new physical activity guidelines target other groups including children and adolescents, women during pregnancy and people with chronic illnesses. The guidelines explain different types of physical activity and give examples of how these activities can be incorporated into the daily lives of all Americans. Check out [www.health.gov/paguidelines](http://www.health.gov/paguidelines) for additional information.