

Increasing Physical Activity for Veterans with Physical or Medical Limitations

Do I need to see my health care team before beginning physical activity?

Many Veterans can begin mild or moderate intensity exercise **safely** without having a check-up. Your MOVE![®] team can tell you if you should have a check-up before starting.



The following Veterans should see their health care team before starting:

- Those with heart and/or lung disease
- Those planning a program of “vigorous” activity

What is the difference between “mild,” “moderate,” and “vigorous” activity?

- **Mild activities** should feel like slow walking or rolling.
 - They should not cause much of a sweat or cause you to have trouble breathing.
 - We participate in mild activities throughout the day.
 - Taking out the trash or walking to the mailbox are examples.



- **Moderate activities** include fast walking or rolling.
 - Your heart will beat a little bit faster.
 - You will sweat lightly, but should not be “out of breath” or exhausted.
- **Vigorous activities** will cause the heart to beat very fast.
 - You will sweat heavily and have some difficulty breathing.
 - It is very difficult to perform vigorous activity for a long time.



Are there certain activities I should avoid?

Very few activities are “off-limits.”

Will I make my condition worse by exercising?

Physical activity **almost always helps improve** medical conditions. It is wise to reduce activity when your condition worsens.

Will my medicines affect my physical activity?

Some medications require a close watch. Talk with your health care team about the medications you are currently taking.

What if I’m in too much pain to be physically active?

Regular physical activity often **improves** chronic pain. It may sometimes take a few weeks to begin to see a benefit. If you feel your pain will keep you from physical activity, see your health care team.