

# Fitness facts and fiction

Is there something that is keeping you from reaching your fitness goals? Find out what's true and what's not to help make your fitness program a success.

## There is only one right way to exercise

**False.** You don't have to exercise intensely for long periods of time. Exercising for 10 minutes 3 times during the day works as well as exercising for 30 minutes all at once. Try doing different exercises during each 10-minute period. Just be sure to keep your exercise level moderate to vigorous. In addition, you don't have to exercise in a gym. You can also exercise at home or outdoors. Good choices include fast walking, bike riding, tennis, pushing a lawn mower, swimming, jogging, and running.

## If I exercise, I can eat more and not worry at all about gaining weight

**False.** Losing weight depends on burning more calories than you eat. The best way to lose weight or maintain a good weight is to exercise regularly and eat proper portions of healthy foods.

## I'm already tired. Exercise will make it worse

**False.** Exercise may improve your energy level. Do not skip your exercise session because you feel tired. Exercise at a lower level. You'll get the benefits of exercise and boost your energy.

## If I do aerobic exercise more vigorously, I can exercise for less time and still get the health benefits

**True.** One minute of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity is about the same as 2 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity. You know you are exercising vigorously if you can't say more than a few words without pausing for a breath. If you are exercising at moderate intensity, you can talk but not sing. Health benefits result from 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity.

## Lifting weights will make me gain weight and inches as I build muscle

**False.** You will probably not gain weight unless you eat more calories. Strength training helps you gain muscle and lose body fat. Because muscle is denser than fat, it takes up less room. So you may stay the same weight but lose inches. You may even lose weight as you burn calories.

**If I only have time to exercise a few minutes a day, it's not worth doing it at all**

**False.** No matter what your age or health, any exercise is better than none at all. Benefits increase the more exercise you do.

**Regular exercise may help me live longer**

**True.** Compared with leading a physically inactive life, exercising regularly can help reduce your risk for some chronic diseases, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes.

*Talk to your healthcare provider before you begin an exercise program.*