

# Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans interpreted for practical use

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The first formal U.S. government recommendations on physical activity, the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, were published in 2008. Now, those guidelines have been interpreted for practical use by health care professionals in the *American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine*.

The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans are comprised of recommendations regarding the types and amounts of physical activity that people should perform for optimum health. Specific guidelines are provided for youth, adults, and [older adults](#), as well as special groups such as pregnant women and those with disabilities. Some of the innovative aspects of the Physical Activity Guidelines include such evidence based recommendations as:

- Exercise that's moderate in intensity, vigorous in intensity or a combination of the two are all counted towards reaching the recommended physical activity goals.
- The target dose of physical activity can be accumulated throughout the week, rather than just day by day.
- Additional health benefits are attained when people do up to twice the amount of physical activity recommended.

In the future, federal health policy will likely place more of an emphasis on preventing [chronic diseases](#) than just on treatment of disease.

Resources such as the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans will help medical and public health professionals respond effectively to the new expectations and opportunities.

"The 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans are important to the health-care community because their release demonstrates the increasing prominence of physical activity promotion as a national health goal," write guest authors (and the main authors of the 2008 Guidelines) Russell R. Pate, PhD, Antronette K. Yancey, MD, MPH, and William E. Kraus, MD in the lead article. "In the future it seems likely that practitioners in medicine and public health will be held to higher standards for promoting [physical activity](#) in individual patients and in the population."

**More information:** The themed issue of AJLM, including the lead article, "The 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans: Implications for Clinical and Public Health Practice," is available free for a limited time at [ajl.sagepub.com/cgi/rapidpdf/1559827609353300v1](http://ajl.sagepub.com/cgi/rapidpdf/1559827609353300v1)

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