



NEWS RELEASE

Defense Commissary Agency

Office of Corporate Communications
1300 E Avenue □ Fort Lee, VA 23801-1800

Tel: (804) 734-8000, Ext. 4-8524 DSN: 687-8000, Ext. 4-8524

FAX: (804) 734-8009 (two pause symbols) 7-8773

or DSN: 687-8009 (two pause symbols) 7-8773

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Contact: Lt. Col. Karen Hawkins, DeCA dietitian
Tel.: (804) 734-8000, Ext. 4-8409
E-mail: karen.hawkins@deca.mil

Check out Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans

*By Lt. Col. Karen E. Hawkins,
DeCA dietitian*

FORT LEE, Va. – The “Eat Healthy and Be Active Your Way” proclamation between the Defense Commissary Agency and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is signed and in motion. We have almost 4,000 people registered as we move into the second week of the President’s Challenge in the commissary. What did you do last week for physical activity? If you still need to register, it’s not too late to join the challenge. Just go to <http://www.commissaries.com> and click on the “President’s Challenge, You’re It, Get Fit” link and register. It’s that simple, and your commissary encourages you to join the challenge today!

Maybe you’re not sure how to get started with being active, or maybe it’s been awhile since you even felt like moving. The following recommendations for adults from the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans might help. The guidelines provide science-based guidance to help Americans aged 6 and older improve their health through appropriate physical activity.

How do I do it?

It’s your choice. Pick an activity that’s easy to fit into your life. Do at least 10 minutes of physical activity at a time. Choose **aerobic** activities that work for you. These make your heart beat faster and can make your heart, lungs and blood vessels stronger and fit. Also, do **strengthening** activities which make your muscles do more work than usual.

Why should I be physically active?

Physical activity can make you feel stronger and more alive. It's a fun way to be with your family or friends. It also helps you improve your health.

How many times a week should I be physically active?

It's up to you, but it's better to spread your activity throughout the week and be active at least three days a week.

How do I build up more physical activity?

Do a little more each time. Once you feel comfortable, do it more often. Then, you can trade activities at a moderate level for vigorous ones that take more effort. You can do moderate and vigorous activities in the same week.

How much physical activity do I need to do?

The following chart tells you about activities that are important for you to do. Do both aerobic and strengthening activities. Each offers important health benefits. And remember, some physical activity is better than none!

Aerobic Activities

If you choose activities at a **moderate level**, do at least **two hours and 30 minutes** a week.

If you choose **vigorous** activities, do at least **one hour and 15 minutes** a week.

- Slowly build up the amount of time you do physical activities. The more time you spend, the more health benefits you gain. Aim for twice the amount of activity in the box at left.
- Do at least 10 minutes at a time.
- You can combine moderate and vigorous activities.

Muscle Strengthening Activities

Do these at least **two days** a week.

- Include all the major muscle groups such as legs, hips, back, chest, stomach, shoulders and arms.
- Exercises for each muscle group should be repeated eight to 12 times per session.

How can I tell an activity at a moderate level from a vigorous one?

Vigorous activities take more effort than moderate ones. Here are just a few moderate and

vigorous aerobic physical activities. Do these for 10 minutes or more at a time.

Moderate Activities

(I can talk while I do them, but I can't sing.)

- Ballroom and line dancing
- Biking on level ground or with few hills
- Canoeing
- General gardening (raking, trimming shrubs)
- Sports where you catch and throw (baseball, softball, volleyball)
- Tennis (doubles)
- Using your manual wheelchair
- Using hand cyclers—also called ergometers
- Walking briskly
- Water aerobics

Vigorous Activities

(I can only say a few words without stopping to catch my breath.)

- Aerobic dance
- Biking faster than 10 miles per hour
- Fast dancing
- Heavy gardening (digging, hoeing)
- Hiking uphill
- Jumping rope
- Martial arts (such as karate)
- Race walking, jogging or running
- Sports with a lot of running (basketball, hockey, soccer)
- Swimming fast or swimming laps
- Tennis (singles)

The recommendations for kids from the Physical Activities Guidelines for Americans at the dietitian section will be posted on www.commissaries.com by May 13. Don't forget, wear your tennis shoes and walk briskly while shopping at the commissary where with savings of more than 30 percent, *it's always worth the trip!*

For more information about making healthy choices, visit Ask the Dietitian on <http://www.commissaries.com> and post your questions on the DeCA Dietitian Forum. Be sure to look for other useful information in the Dietitian's Voice archive. Also Sign up with the DeCA Dietitian on <http://www.twitter.com> and get messages sent to your cell phone today. For delicious recipes, check out Kay's Kitchen. And to enjoy all your commissary has to offer, sign up for the *Commissary Connection*.

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About DeCA: *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings worth about \$3,400 annually for a family of four. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America's military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*