



# NEWS RELEASE

## Defense Commissary Agency

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## Being active can produce long-term health benefits

*By Karen Hawkins,  
DeCA dietitian*

**FORT LEE, Va.** – Fall is right around the corner, and there is still time to pull out the lawn mower, bike, roller blades, bowling ball and the swimsuit and be active your way. Want to lose a few pounds, maintain your weight, lower your blood pressure, or manage diabetes and feel better? Start today with being active according to the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. The guidelines are designed to provide information and guidance on the types and amounts of physical activity for Americans aged 6 years and older.

The main idea behind the guidelines is that regular physical activity over months and years can produce long-term health benefits. When my sons ask me why we use a push mower instead of a riding mower I tell them it's to help them be healthier by being active when mowing the yard.

### Adults need to be active

Adults should do a minimum of two-and-a-half hours of moderate-intensity aerobic activity a week by doing activities like brisk walking, ballroom dancing or general gardening. Adults can choose 75 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity by doing exercises like jogging, aerobic dancing and jumping rope. Adults also may choose combinations of moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic activity.

Aerobic activity should be performed in episodes of at least 10 minutes, and preferably spread throughout the week. For additional and more extensive health benefits, adults should

increase their aerobic physical activity to five hours (300 minutes) a week of moderate-intensity or two-and-a-half hours a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity activity. Additional health benefits are gained by engaging in physical activity beyond this amount.

Adults should also do muscle-strengthening activities on two or more days a week to achieve the unique benefits of strengthening activities.

## **Consider the President's Challenge**

Often, getting started is the hardest part, so to make it a little easier for you, sign up for the President's Challenge at <http://www.presidentschallenge.org> and track your activity. Your local commissary is taking the challenge with the Department of Defense and invites you to join today.

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. Sign up with the DeCA Dietitian on [www.twitter.com](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*.

**-DeCA-**

**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 more than \$4,400 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.*