



## Exercise and Weight Loss

### 2009 Guidelines

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How much exercise must we do to lose weight? We know that 45 minutes a day, 5 days a week (about 4 hours per week) will improve our energy level. But, is it enough to lose weight? This infamous question is back with an updated answer.

According to the 2009 guidelines issued by the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), we may need to spend more time exercising if we want to lose weight. The updated ACSM guidelines on this subject now state that to **maintain** our weight it is necessary to do between 2 1/2 and 4 hours of moderate intensity physical activity per week. But, if our goal is to **lose** weight we'll have to put in more than 4 hours per week. In addition, the ACSM reports new evidence which suggests that we'll have to do as much exercise as we needed to do for weight loss - more than 4 hours per week - to prevent regaining our lost weight.

The 2009 ACSM guidelines also specify that our exercise program should include strength training to build and tone our muscles.

The American Dietetic Association issued an updated 2009 position statement on weight management. They state that successful weight management, to improve overall health for adults, requires a lifelong commitment to healthful lifestyle behaviors emphasizing sustainable and enjoyable eating practices and daily physical activity.

Most experts agree that exercise alone is much less effective at promoting and maintaining weight loss than exercise combined with a positive change in eating habits. But, if committing to both is overwhelming, we shouldn't just do nothing. Many studies suggest that exercise is beneficial even if we don't lose weight. Exercise enhances our quality of life by improving our physical and mental well being. It can improve our energy level, social life, emotional state, and free us from physical pain. The greatest gains are seen in those who exercise regularly for at least 3 hours per week. But, exercising for as little as 75 minutes per week makes a difference.

References: DrWeil.com, 2009; Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise, 2/09; American Dietetic Association, 2009; Archives of Internal Medicine, 2/9/09; Pennington Biomedical Research Center in Baton Rouge, LA, 2009