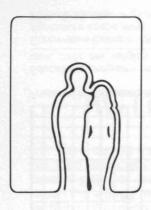


ACTIVITY HELPS CONTROL WEIGHT



# TEXAS AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE The Texas A&M University System

#### Waist Watcher:

Increased activity helps burn up energy from food, firms muscles and decreases appetite. Physical activity is influenced by the way we live.

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County Extension Agent

## **ACTIVITY HELPS CONTROL WEIGHT**

Many people think of losing weight as just cutting out food and calories. But the amount of weight a person gains or loses depends on a balance between the energy from food and the energy used up (activity). We need energy just to live. This is the basic energy need. We have no control over this basic energy need of our bodies.

In addition to the basic energy need, the energy used for physical activity determines the amount of energy needed from food.

#### Physical Activity Important

The amount and kind of physical activity influences how much can be eaten without gaining extra weight. A man with an office job requiring him to sit most of the day burns up only 2,500 calories a day. A man doing heavy physical labor will burn up as much as 4,500 calories. A man involved in sports and very heavy physical work may burn up 6,000 calories.

Research has shown that overweight women walk less than women of normal weight. Overweight women walk about 2.1 miles a day while women of normal weight walk an average of 4.9 miles.

A small amount of exercise actually reduces the appetite. When people sit or are inactive, they have larger appetites than when they are active. As the exercise and physical activities become more strenuous, appetites increase; but it takes quite a lot of exercise. Inherited overweight also can be controlled or reduced by exercise and increased physical activity.

#### Change Activity Habits

Most people find it easier to engage in moderate activities on a regular basis than in strenuous activities. The more often an activity occurs, the more likely it is to become a regular habit. Walking rapidly for 20 minutes every day burns up 3,000 calories in a month; 3,500 calories is a pound of fat. You might take two 10-minute walks, or four 5-minute walks. It all adds up the same. Above all, make a conscious effort to move around more, especially by walking.

Increasing physical activity helps to make muscles firmer, burns off stored food (fat) and helps you do something instead of eating.

Levels of activity vary from very light to heavy. Look at the activity chart to see if most of your activities are very light, light, moderate or heavy activities.

To get a feel for light and moderate activity, try walking at different speeds for 5 minutes. For light activity, walk two and a half blocks in 5 minutes; for moderate activity, walk four blocks in 5 minutes.

Keep an activity record for a week. Put an "X" in a block for every 5 minutes you spend doing an activity. Gradually increase the number of squares in the light activity column and then in the moderate activity column.

Think about becoming more active. Plan things to do instead of eating. Do these activities when you feel the urge to eat.

### Suggested Beginning Activities

Before you allow yourself to watch your favorite television show, go for a short, brisk walk. First walk around the house or building; then around the block; and then try a longer walk.

While watching television, do stretching activities or run in place when each commercial comes on.

Put a lightweight article you use every day on a top shelf so you have to reach for it, or on a bottom shelf that requires you to bend to pick it up.

Park your car an extra block away from work and walk, or get off the bus a block or two before your stop. If you do not have time in the morning to park farther away, move your car at lunch time.

Do household chores that require you to move around more. Make several trips to put things away.

Invite a friend to go for a walk in the neighborhood or in a park. When you do walk, walk faster than you are now in the habit of doing.

Try an activity such as extending your arms straight out from the shoulders. Turn from the waist and with the right arm reach for the wall that is to your left. Turn the other way and with your left arm reach for the wall that is to the right. Make 10 turns.

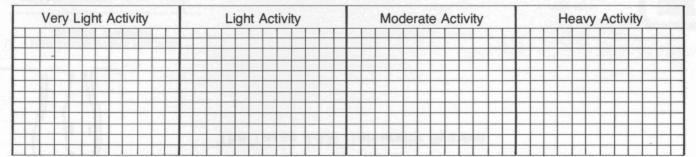
#### Activity Levels\*

Very Light Burns 1 to 2 calories per minute	Light Burns 2 to 3.9 calories per minute	Moderate Burns 4 to 6 calories per minute	Heavy Burns 6 to 10 calories
Seated and standing activities - office work Auto and truck driving Typing, playing musical instruments Sewing Ironing Knitting Peeling potatoes Preparing vegetables Cleaning shoes	Walking on level ground, 2.5 to 3 miles per hour Carpentry Restaurant trades Cannery work Shopping with a light load Golfing Sailing Playing table tennis Making beds Hanging out laundry Sweeping floors Vacuuming floors Cleaning windows Preparing a meal Cleaning cupboards Dusting	Walking 3.5 to 4 miles per hour Weeding and hoeing Scrubbing floors Shopping with a heavy load Cycling Playing tennis Dancing Chopping firewood Polishing furniture Washing clothes by hand Hunting Playing racquet ball	Walking uphill with a load Felling trees Working with a pick and shovel Swimming Playing football Jogging

<sup>\*</sup>The amount of walking around and other whole body movements are critical in figuring the amount of energy for household tasks. These are calories burned per minute. Multiply the number of calories times 60 for the amount you burn off in one hour.

#### **Activity Record**

Keep this activity record for 1 week. Place an "X" in a block for every 5 minutes you spend doing an activity in each activity level. Gradually increase the number of squares in the light activity column and then in the moderate activity column.



Prepared by Extension foods and nutrition specialists, The Texas A&M University System.

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