

# Boost Your Brain and Body Power

## Physical Activity and Alzheimer's Disease

### Why be Active?

#### The Benefits of Physical Activity

##### Regular physical activity is associated with:

- a reduced risk of developing Alzheimer's disease,
- maintaining independence and the ability to carry out the tasks of daily living when you have Alzheimer's disease,
- maintaining quality of life when you have Alzheimer's disease.

##### Routine physical activity also helps you:

- relax, have fun, have more energy
- deal with stress and reduce your risk for depression
- improve your heart, lung and bone health
- have better posture and balance, reduce your risk of falling
- maintain a healthy weight.

Family members and caregivers are also encouraged to follow the activity plan described here. The benefits of active living are good for everyone!



## Getting Started

**If you are already active the goal is to continue. However, you should discuss your plans to become more active with a health professional if:**

- You have a medical condition such as heart disease or diabetes
- You tend to lose your balance when being active
- You have a bone or joint problem (e.g., a problem with your back or hips).

**It's not too late to start.** Begin with what is comfortable for you. Then add a few minutes or additional activities when you feel ready.



*enjoy an active life with family and friends*

## What Kinds of Physical Activity Should I Do?

The Ontario Brain Institute recommends that you aim to meet the Physical Activity Guidelines for Older Adults from the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology <http://bit.ly/1acBylm>

**Move more every day.** For example:

- get up and move about every 2 hours. Try deep breathing and lifting your arms over your head
- use the stairs
- enjoy active hobbies (e.g., bird watching, fishing, gardening)
- move to music
- engage in light housework (e.g., doing dishes or laundry)
- play with your grandchildren
- take an after dinner walk with your partner
- go shopping at the mall and carry your parcels.

**Enjoy aerobic activity.**

Aim for 150 minutes (2.5 hours) per week in bouts of 10 minutes or more of moderate activities which make you breathe harder and sweat a little. Aerobic activities are continuous, whole body activities such as:

- brisk walking, pole walking
- snowshoeing
- hiking
- cycling on a stationary bike
- swimming
- cross-country skiing
- skating
- rowing, paddling and kayaking.

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## Strengthen your muscles and bones.

Aim to do activities 2 days a week and work your large muscle groups (arms, legs, back, abdomen). Feel your muscles working but no pain. Exercises can be done sitting or standing. Examples include:

- exercises, using resistance (e.g., elastic bands, weights, machines or your own body weight)
- exercise classes
- heavy yard work and gardening (e.g., digging, raking leaves, hauling soil, lifting rocks or debris)
- aqua fitness classes
- curling and bowling/lawn bowling
- heavier house work (e.g., sweeping, vacuuming, scrubbing).



*get outside, get some fresh air*

*there are many ways to get active, find your passion*



## Enhance your balance.

Breathe deeply, stretch and bend every day. Stretch slowly, feel your muscles and joints working but no pain. Examples include:

- tai chi
- yoga
- golf
- dancing
- stretching and relaxation exercises (e.g., breathe deeply as you raise both arms over your head and then slowly lower them)
- balance exercises (e.g., standing on one foot).

## Stay Safe

**If you have difficulty balancing,** use a chair, hold on to a counter or be within reach of a grab bar.

**Take extra care as a pedestrian.** Wear an ID bracelet if you are walking alone.

**Always wear a life jacket in boats and have a friend when in and around the water.** Swim at pools with a qualified lifeguard on duty.

**If you start to have trouble walking and moving around,** continue to do safe activities such as light housework, stationary bike cycling, chair yoga and sitting exercises. Use a cane or other mobility aid if you need to. Join a program with a qualified instructor or ask a health professional to help you modify your activities.

For more information about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, visit [alzheimerontario.ca](http://alzheimerontario.ca) or call 211 to contact the Society near you.



HAMILTON AND HALTON  
**Alzheimer Foundation**

*Where memories are lost... We'll be found.*

*Société Alzheimer Society*  
ONTARIO



## Stay Motivated

**Be active with others** (including pets). It means more fun, social interaction, social support and friendship. You are more likely to get moving if you make a commitment to do it with someone else.

**Use the action planner to make a routine.**

**More may be better.** Challenge yourself. You may be surprised at what you can do.

**Build on your abilities, interest and skills.** Choose activities you like and have fun!

