

Get Fit For Life

**Exercise DVD
Companion Booklet**

Look inside for your free exercise log



Welcome to the Healthier U.S. Veterans “Get Fit for Life” Fitness Booklet

HealthierUS Veterans is a joint project by the U.S. Departments of Veterans Affairs and Health and Human Services. Its aim is to educate veterans, their families and communities about the health risks of being overweight and the health benefits of physical activity.

Please read this booklet before exercising with the DVD. It will only take a few minutes and you'll learn:

- Some safety tips to think about before you start
- What you'll find on the DVD
- What you'll need to help you exercise
- Helpful information for exercising safely
- Tips for aerobic, strength and balance, and stretching activities
- How to keep track of your progress. There is a pull out log in the center of the booklet.
- The basics of weight control

***Before you start any program
of physical activity, check with
your doctor first.***

The **Get Fit for Life** exercise DVD and this booklet can help you start an exercise or fitness program.

Physical activity has many benefits including:

- reducing the risk of heart disease
- reducing the risk of type 2 diabetes
- helping with weight control
- preventing bone loss
- strengthening muscles and improving balance
- boosting energy levels

Bottom line, you'll feel better and improve your health.

Use this booklet, along with the DVD to put together an activity routine that meets your goals.



SAFETY FIRST

Before you start any program of physical activity, check with your doctor first.

Stop exercising **immediately** if you experience any of the following:

- Severe pain, tightness, pressure or discomfort in your chest
- Severe shortness of breath
- Severe nausea or vomiting
- Sudden onset weakness or changes in sensation in your arm and/or leg on one side of your body
- Difficulty swallowing, talking, or seeing
- Severe headache or dizziness

CALL 911 immediately if these symptoms do not disappear in a few minutes.

Get Fit For Life

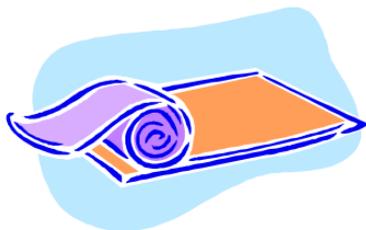
Before you watch the DVD, here is a preview of what you'll see.

- A welcome and introduction by VA Secretary Nicholson and fitness expert Denise Austin.
- General information on how much to exercise, how often and how hard, as well as some safety tips.
- Watch a demonstration for safely getting onto and up from the floor.
- Follow-along exercises for your personal workout:
 - ◆ Warm-up
 - ◆ Aerobic activity
 - ◆ Cool-down
 - ◆ Strength and balance activities for beginners
 - ◆ More advanced strength and balance activities
 - ◆ Stretching activities
- Stories from veterans to help you *Get Fit For Life*.

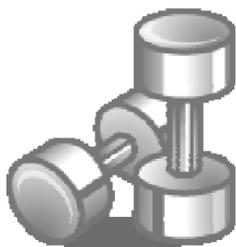


What You'll Need

- For comfort, you can use a folded blanket or towel when doing exercises on the floor.



- A resistance band is an elastic band used for strength training. You can also use household products like a can of soup or bottle of water as hand weights. If you have a latex allergy, you should use a latex-free resistance band.



- For safety, use a sturdy chair to use for exercises done in a seated position.
- Water to drink before, during and after you exercise.



How Much, How Often, How Hard?

Use the principles of F.I.T.T. - Frequency, Intensity, Time and Type of activity, to get active and be fit for life. The letters in “FITT” stand for the following:

Frequency- how often you are active

Intensity- how hard you are working during an activity

Time- how long you active

Type- what kinds of activity you are doing

FREQUENCY - You'll want to work towards being active on 5 or more days per week. If you are just getting started with activity, it's okay to start with less. Gradually work up to 5 or more days per week.

INTENSITY - For aerobic activities, you'll want to aim for a medium level of intensity. At a medium intensity, you will be working hard enough to cause a light sweat and a little hard breathing, but not so hard that you can't talk or catch your breath. Examples of medium intensity activities include brisk walking or raking leaves. Remember, if you haven't been very physically active, start at a lower intensity. Gradually increase your intensity over time.

One way to tell how hard you are working is the 'talk' test. If you can sing while doing the activity, your activity is too light. If you can talk during your activity, your activity is just right. If you become winded or are too out of breath, your activity is too much.

TIME - For aerobic activities, try to plan for a total of 30 minutes per day. If you are just starting out, you can start with less time, for example, 10 minutes. In fact, you can get your 30 minutes of activity by spreading it out during the day. Three 10 minute “chunks” of activity might be easier when you first begin.



TYPE - Aerobic activities include walking briskly, biking, swimming or dancing. They are activities that can get your heart and lungs working a little harder. Do these unless your doctor has told you not to. As your stamina improves, you can increase the frequency and time spent doing the activity. The next step is to increase the intensity.

Aerobic activities are important for your health.



Activities that improve your strength and balance are also important. Think about adding strength activities 2-3 days per week. Strength activities help build strong muscles and bones. These will also benefit your health. Be sure to warm-up, cool-down, and stretch whenever you are active.

Activity Log

**Before using,
please pull out
and make copies.**

Physical Activity Log

Keeping a log can help motivate you to be active. There are several versions available on the President's Challenge website. Visit www.healthierusveterans.gov for more information. This one is provided for your use. Pull it out and use it with a paper log.

My goal for this week is:	Aerobic Activities 30 minutes most days of the week List what you did	
Sunday		
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		

I met my activity goal this week

I didn't meet my activity goal this week...here's what I need to do

al ways to keep a log. HealthierUS Veterans encourages the use of va.gov. To log activity, click on Fitness Challenges. Another way and make copies.

Strength and Balance At least 2 days a week List what you did	Stretching Activities Most days of the week List what you did

ed to do differently next week. _____

Aerobic Activity Tips

Aerobic activities cause your heart and lungs to work harder for a period of time. Your heart will beat faster and you will breathe harder. Some of the activities you can do include walking, swimming, bicycling and dancing. Or you can play with your children, your grandchildren, do housework or garden.

Safety tip: *If you are not active, start slowly. Although the goal is at least 30-minutes of activity most days of the week, you can split that into several parts. For example, you can take three 10-minute walks during the day.*

Here are some more tips:

- Maintain a comfortable pace. You should be able to hold a conversation.
- If you have not been active, start at a slow pace and gradually increase how often you exercise and the amount of time.
- Find an activity that you enjoy.
- Try to alternate the types of activities you do. Walk one day and go dancing the next.
- Invite a friend or your spouse to join.
- If exercising outdoors, be careful if it is very warm or very cold.



Strength and Balance Tips

Strength activities and aerobic activities differ in terms of how hard you should work. For aerobic activities the goal is to keep going (at least 30 minutes) at a moderate pace.



Strength activities - the goal is to work at a harder intensity, but for a shorter time.

For example, if you do an activity 15 times and you can easily do more, you should add more weight or use a stronger (stiffer) resistance band, instead of doing it more times.

On the other hand, if you can't do an exercise 8 times, you are working too hard. You need to reduce the amount of weights or resistance that you are using. As you get stronger, increase the resistance or weights you are using.

- Use an amount of weight or resistance so you can do the exercise comfortably at least 10 times.

Try to do the strength and balance exercises for all major muscle groups (arms, legs and trunk) at least twice a week.

Safety tip: Do not do strength exercises on the same muscle groups two days in a row.

Muscles need at least a day to recover from strength activities. This will help to avoid injury and soreness.

How long you spend doing strength activities depends on how much time you have and how much benefit you want. A complete fitness routine includes all of the activities that will be demonstrated on this DVD. If you don't have enough time, then mix and match activities to suit your needs. Remember to include a good variety of upper, lower, and trunk muscle activities.

Instructors will show you a variety of strength exercises for you to follow along. If you are just



starting out, the weight of your own arms or legs may be enough for you. As you build up your strength, you'll want to keep challenging yourself. You can do this by increasing the amount of weight or resistance that you are using.

Stretching Tips

Stretching activities help increase your flexibility. They can also make everyday activities like bending to tie your shoes easier. Stretching exercises can also help as you recover from an injury. They may even prevent an injury from happening.

Here are some tips to get the most out of your stretch:



- Stretch in both directions. If you stretch to the left, don't forget to stretch to the right.
- Avoid fast, jerky movements. Stretch slowly and smoothly.
- Stretch to a point where you place mild, but not painful, stretch on the muscles. When you repeat the stretch, you should be able to go a little further without pain.
- Hold each stretch for 10-30 seconds. Repeat each stretch 3-5 times.
- Breathe slowly in and out without holding your breath.
- If a stretch causes too much pain, stop doing it, or do it more gently. Listen to your body!

The President's Challenge

Keeping track or logging your activity can help you stay motivated. There are several ways you can track or log your activity. A paper (tear out) log is provided with this DVD. You can also keep track on-line. HealthierUS Veterans promotes the use of the President's Challenge website.

Visit www.healthierusveterans.gov and click on **Fitness Challenges** to register.

The President's Challenge is part of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. Its aim is for all Americans to be active every day. All levels and types of activities are encouraged. No matter what your activity and fitness level, the President's Challenge can help inspire you be active and Get Fit for Life.

To participate, register and log your activities online. It's easy. There are more than 100 activities listed. You can even earn awards. You can earn the Presidential Active Lifestyle Award by being active for 30 minutes a day on at least 5 days per week, for a total of 6 weeks.

Congratulations on getting started.

Get Fit For Life!

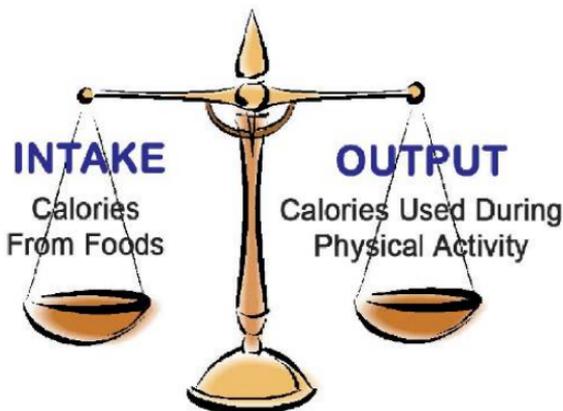


The Basics of Weight Control

Being active can help you with weight control. But, the foods you eat and beverages you drink will also affect your weight.

To lose weight you need to:

- Eat and drink fewer calories
- Increase your physical activity
- For best results, do both



THE ENERGY BALANCE

The food you eat and the beverages you drink provide energy and nutrients. The nutrients we need are: water, carbohydrate, protein, fat, dietary fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Three of these nutrients (carbohydrate, protein and fat) provide energy in the form of calories.

When you take in more calories than you use, you gain weight.

Most of the calories you do not use are stored as body fat. This is true regardless of whether they came from fat, carbohydrate, or protein. You can use more calories by being more active.

You can manage your weight by keeping a balance between what you eat and drink and how active you are.

MOVE!

To help veterans with their weight, the Department of Veterans Affairs developed the *MOVE!* Weight Management Program. The focus of *MOVE!* is behavior, nutrition and physical activity. *MOVE!* helps veterans lose weight, keep it off and improve their health.

The *MOVE!* website (www.move.va.gov) has handouts and other resources on losing weight, keeping it off and improving your health. One unique aspect of *MOVE!* is the *MOVE!23* questionnaire.

After the *MOVE!23* is completed, you can choose and print a report personalized for you. This report will recommend handouts for you to use and areas where you may need to focus to achieve your goals. You can also print a report to share with your healthcare provider.

Visit www.move.va.gov or call your local VA medical center for more information about *MOVE!*

Produced by the Employee Education System
in collaboration with the
Office of Veterans Health Communications
and the
VA National Center for Health Promotion
and Disease Prevention



www.VA.gov
www.HealthierUSVeterans.va.gov
www.MOVE.va.gov