

## Physical Activity

### Overview:

- Lack of physical activity is a major risk factor for diseases such as cancer, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases.
- Physical activity has many health benefits, and can help prevent diseases.
- More than 80% of the world's adolescents are insufficiently physically active.
- Physical inactivity has been identified as the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality.
- Physical activity can help maintain a healthy weight.

### Defining Physical Activity:

Physical activity is defined as any bodily movement performed by the muscles and requires energy expenditure, including activities carried out while working, playing, performing household tasks or doing recreational activities. Regular moderate physical activity (such as walking or cycling) has great health benefits for individuals of all ages. Individuals can easily achieve the recommended activity levels by being more and more active throughout the day in small and simple ways.

### Types of Physical Activity:

- **Aerobic Exercise:**

It is physical exercise that depends primarily on moving the large muscles of the body, such as the muscles of the arms and legs. It is characterized by an increased heart rate and a difficulty in breathing during exercise. Over time, this type of exercise can strengthen the heart and lungs and make them more efficient.

**Examples:** Running, swimming, walking, cycling, dancing, jumping and others.

- **Muscle-strengthening activities:**

These activities promote and improve muscle strength and increase their endurance.

**Examples:** push-ups, sit-ups, lifting weights, climbing stairs, and heavy gardening, such as digging and shoveling.

- **Bone-strengthening activities:**

These activities help with building and maintaining strong bones, such as the bones of the legs and feet.

**Examples:** Running, walking, jumping rope and lifting weights and others.

- **Stretching:**

Stretching is a form of physical exercise that helps increase the flexibility of the muscles and the joints surrounding it, as well as improve their range of motion, and maintain their efficiency.

**Examples:** Seated pike stretches (sitting with your legs straight, bending at the waist and touching the toes), Yoga exercises and others.

### **Benefits of physical activity:**

- Improves muscular and cardiorespiratory fitness.
- Enhances the mood and mental health.
- Improves bone and functional health.
- Physical activity is fundamental to energy balance and weight control.
- Helps smokers to quit smoking.
- Reduces the risk of hypertension, coronary heart disease, strokes, diabetes, various types of cancer (including breast cancer and colon cancer), and depression.
- Reduces the risk of falls as well as hip or vertebral fractures.

Physical inactivity has been identified as one of the leading risk factors for global mortality.

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