Getting Started

Thank you for your interest in the NCPAD 14-Week Program. Please log in or register to view your personalized exercise and nutrition program.

We know that starting a new physical activity program can be both exciting and a little overwhelming at the same time. We have found that there are some questions that people commonly ask before they get started. In order to help you get ready to get moving, we have provided answers to these frequently asked questions (FAQs). We are excited to continue to build from this in the weeks to come!

FAQs:

1. I am new to physical activity. What should be my starting point?

Everyone will have a different starting point based upon their exercise history, current fitness level, abilities, and goals. Do not feel like you have to start big. Take a small step forward. If you are new to exercise, try to do shorter sessions on several days a week (maybe you start with five minutes in the morning and five minutes in the afternoon on three days of the week). See how that feels, and then start to make changes. It’s better to start with something you feel is manageable and that you are able to keep up with than to do a lot for one or two weeks and then stop. Something is better than nothing, always!

If you want some specific numbers and measurements about where you are starting so that you have more specific targets for your goals, take a look at the Assessment information on your Profile page. It will give you some ideas of things you can measure or test for yourself.

2. How much physical activity should I try to do?

The guidelines below were designed for adults with disabilities and should be viewed as a long-term goal. When an individual is unable to meet these guidelines, whether that be because he or she is just starting to get active or they are unable to for whatever reason, that individual is encouraged to engage in regular physical activity according to their abilities and to try to avoid inactivity.

Aerobic activity guidelines:

- At least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity (anything that causes small increases in breathing or heart rate or make you feel like you are working somewhat hard) OR
- At least 75 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity (anything that causes large increases in breathing
or heart rate or makes you feel like you are working really hard) OR

• An equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic activity.

   Note: Aerobic activity should be performed in episodes of 10 minutes or more, and preferably, it should be spread throughout the week.

Muscle strengthening activity guidelines:

• Do muscle-strengthening activities of moderate or high intensity that involve all major muscle groups on at least two days a week

Flexibility activities:

• Stretch all major muscle groups following each activity session
• Flexibility exercises can be done on every day of the week and should target the full body

(Reference: 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Adults with Disabilities, United States Department of Health and Human Services)

3. How do I increase my activity levels?

There may be a big gap between where you are starting and the physical activity guidelines. *Do not be discouraged!* Everyone has to start somewhere and everyone is different. The important thing is that you do start and that you continue to challenge yourself and make progress. Small changes can have a big impact, so continue to make manageable changes. Consider adding an additional day of activity, being active for a few extra minutes, or working a little bit harder for the same amount of time. Make one change at a time, see how it goes, and then think about the next change you are going to make.

4. How do I exercise in a safe way?

A healthcare provider can help an individual judge what amounts and types of physical activities are appropriate for their abilities. If you are new to exercise, it’s always a good idea to talk to a doctor before beginning your program. If you have ever been told that you shouldn’t exercise, we strongly advise you to get clearance from your physician before getting started.

A few important notes:

• Start small and progress according to your ability levels.
• Drink lots of water and listen to your body.
• If something is painful, then stop doing it.
• Never hold your breath while you exercise.
• Keep something close-by as a balance support and clear other obstacles out of the way.
• Contact the 14-Week Coaches or other fitness professionals if you have any questions about how to do an exercise
appropriate for your individual needs.

**We advise that you stop exercising immediately if you feel chest pain or discomfort, breathless, flu like symptoms (specifically nausea, clamminess or cold sweats), unexplained fatigue, weakness or dizziness, pain in upper back, shoulders, neck, or jaw, or feelings of anxiety. If you experience these signs and symptoms please consult with your physician as they may be signs of a serious medical condition.**

5. How do I prepare my body before an activity and bring it back down to a resting level when I’m done?

To get ready for activity, you should do what we call a “warm-up.” This involves 5-10 minutes of low intensity exercise such as walking/wheeling or marching in place (seated or standing). This allows your heart rate and breathing rate to increase slowly so that you can ease into your activity.

After you are done with your activity, allow your body to come back to a resting level by doing an additional 5-10 minutes of low intensity exercise. This can look similar to the warm-up, but often also involves flexibility exercises.

6. How do I adapt an exercise for my ability level?

You will notice that many of the exercises we provide can be done standing, sitting, or lying. For many standing exercises, you do not need to have full function of your lower body to do them safely. You may just need to hold onto a balance-support (such as a chair, table, walker, or other steady surface) or keep one close-by just in case. Sitting exercises can be done from a wheelchair or any other type of chair. If in a wheelchair, be sure your breaks are on. If in a chair, be sure it is stable. If you are doing a seated exercise that requires you to lean forward, be sure to only go as far forward as is comfortable and safe according to your level of function in your core. Nearly any standing exercise can be done in a seated position. Lying exercises can be done on the floor, but we also encourage you to try doing some of these exercises before you get out of bed in the morning if getting down on the floor is difficult for you.

There are many other ways to adapt exercises! We try to provide as many adaptations as possible throughout the program, but if there isn’t something that works for you please contact us. We would like to work with you individually to find something that works!

**Remember: Physical activity is for everybody! It doesn’t matter where you are starting or what your ability levels are – there is something for you. Sometimes that just means getting creative – which is what we hope this program will help you do!**

Proper precautions must be taken before you begin an exercise program. An understanding of your current health status and potential problems is necessary for you to exercise safely. Please contact your physician if you have any concerns. This program is intended to incorporate physical activity into your daily life, but should not be used in place of physical therapy, professional medical advice or treatment.

Contact us: 9am CDT to 5pm CDT 1-800-900-8086