



6 Benefits of Regular Physical Activity

Want to feel better, have more energy and even add years to your life? Just exercise. The health benefits of regular exercise and physical activity are hard to ignore. Everyone benefits from exercise, regardless of age, sex, or physical ability. Need more convincing to get moving? Check out these six ways that exercise can lead to a happier, healthier you.

Exercise Controls Weight

Exercise can help prevent excess weight gain or help maintain weight loss. When you engage in physical activity, you burn calories. The more intense the activity, the more calories you burn.

Regular trips to the gym are great, but don't worry if you can't find a large chunk of time to exercise every day. Any amount of activity is better than none. To reap the benefits of exercise, just get more active throughout your day — take the stairs instead of the elevator or rev up your household chores. Consistency is key.



Exercise Combats Health Conditions and Diseases

Worried about heart disease? Hoping to prevent high blood pressure? No matter what your current weight is, being active boosts high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol, the "good" cholesterol, and it decreases unhealthy triglycerides. This one-two punch keeps your blood flowing smoothly, which decreases your risk of cardiovascular diseases.

Regular exercise helps prevent or manage many health problems and concerns, including:

- Stroke
- Metabolic syndrome
- High blood pressure

- Type 2 diabetes
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Many types of cancer
- Arthritis
- Falls

It can also help improve cognitive function and helps lower the risk of death from all causes.

Exercise Improves Mood

Need an emotional lift? Or need to destress after a stressful day? A gym session or brisk walk can help. Physical activity stimulates various brain chemicals that may leave you feeling happier, more relaxed, and less anxious.

You may also feel better about your appearance and yourself when you exercise regularly, which can boost your confidence and improve your self-esteem.

Exercise Boosts Energy

Winded by grocery shopping or household chores? Regular physical activity can improve your muscle strength and boost your endurance.

Exercise delivers oxygen and nutrients to your tissues and helps your cardiovascular system work more efficiently. And when your heart and lung health improve, you have more energy to tackle daily chores.

Exercise Promotes Better Sleep

Struggling to snooze? Regular physical activity can help you fall asleep faster, get better sleep, and deepen your sleep. Just don't exercise too close to bedtime, or you may be too energized to go to sleep.

Exercise Can Be Fun ... and Social!

Exercise and physical activity can be enjoyable. They give you a chance to unwind, enjoy the outdoors or simply engage in activities that make you happy. Physical activity can also help you connect with family or friends in a fun social setting.

So, take a dance class, hit the hiking trails, or join a soccer team. Find a physical activity you enjoy, and just do it. Bored? Try something new or do something with friends or family.

The Bottom Line on Exercise

Exercise and physical activity are great ways to feel better, boost your health, and have fun. For most healthy adults, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends these exercise guidelines:

- **Aerobic activity.** Get at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity a week, or a combination of moderate and vigorous activity. The guidelines suggest that you spread out this exercise during the week. To provide even greater health benefit and to assist with weight loss or maintaining weight loss, at least 300 minutes a week is recommended. But even small amounts of physical activity are helpful. Being active for short periods of time throughout the day can add up to provide health benefit.



- **Strength training.** Do strength training exercises for all major muscle groups at least two times a week. Aim to do a single set of each exercise using a weight or resistance level heavy enough to tire your muscles after about 12 to 15 repetitions.

Moderate aerobic exercise includes activities such as brisk walking, biking, swimming, and mowing the lawn. Vigorous aerobic exercise includes activities such as running, heavy yardwork and aerobic dancing. Strength training can include use of weight machines, your own body weight, heavy bags, resistance tubing or resistance paddles in the water, or activities such as rock climbing.

If you want to lose weight, meet specific fitness goals, or get even more benefits, you may need to ramp up your moderate aerobic activity even more.

Remember to check with your doctor before starting a new exercise program, especially if you have any concerns about your fitness, haven't exercised for a long time, have chronic health problems, such as heart disease, diabetes or arthritis.





Getting the Most Out of Your Benefits

Are you getting the most from your benefits? There are many **'free'** ways to use your benefit plans to improve your overall health.

Medical Plan

All employees and dependents who are covered on our medical plan should seek yearly preventative care visits and immunizations. Our medical plan covers preventative services, like flu and COVID-19 vaccine shots, and other immunizations based on wellness and age recommended guidelines, at no cost.

You can find a list of recommended preventative services on the CommunityCare web site at <https://cot.ccok.com/>.

24/7 Nurse Line

Employees enrolled in the city's medical benefits plan have access to a 24-hour Nurse Line. Employees can speak with a registered nurse to get a quick answer on a health issue that does not require immediate medical treatment or a physician visit. Nurses will answer questions regarding symptoms, medications and side effects, self-care home treatments, and advice on when to seek care.

Call (918) 594-4006 then press 3 for the Nurse Line.

Pharmacy Benefits

Want to save money on medications? Generic drugs are versions of brand-name drugs that undergo the same strict FDA standards. The only difference is the generic version of a drug can cost on average, 80 to 85 percent less than the brand-name equivalent. To find out if one of your medications has a generic version, visit www.fda.gov.

Also, save yourself some time by receiving your maintenance medications via mail order.

Personal Health Assessments (PHA)

All employees enrolled in one of our medical benefits plans can receive a complete health screening to identify risk factors such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, obesity, and much more.

Whether enrolled in the HSA or the CareATC option, you and your spouse can schedule a Personal Health Assessment at no cost to you. Make an appointment at CareATC today by calling 800-993-8244.

Dental

Good oral health is important to your overall health. Preventative care and two annual cleanings per year are covered at 100 percent.

But did you know, if you are diagnosed with cardiovascular disease, are diabetic or are pregnant, you can qualify for one additional cleaning. To have the additional cleanings covered, a letter must be submitted to our dental plan provider, Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) by the employee's physician verifying one of the qualifying medical conditions. This letter can also be submitted along with the claim.

Contact BCBS for questions on your dental coverage at 888-381-9727.

Vision

Did you know getting your eyes checked regularly is important even if you do not wear glasses or contacts. Through CommunityCare you can receive an annual eye exam at no co-pay for in-network services. Your screening includes annual vision screening, glaucoma screening, and refraction for glasses. Contracted providers also offer a 10 to 15 percent discount for eyeglasses and contacts purchased at the vision providers office.

Search for an in-network vision provider at <https://cot.ccok.com/>.

Voya Plans

Did you know Accident, Hospital Indemnity and Critical Illness coverage(s) are included in your wellness benefits?

The wellness benefit provides a payment if you complete an annual preventative screening. The plans pay you or your spouse, \$100 to \$150, and covered dependents, \$50, who have a preventative screening test and submit a claim. The wellness benefit will pay per covered person and is payable once a year under all three plans.

Some examples of health screening tests include but is not limited to:

- COVID-19 testing or vaccination
- Mammography
- Stress Test
- Well Child/Preventative exams through age 18
- Colonoscopy
- Pap Smear
- Routine Eye or Dental Exams
- PHA/Biometric Screening

To submit a claim, you can call 888-238-4840 or submit online at <https://claimscenter.voya.com/static/claimscenter/>

Gym Reimbursement

Do you have a gym that you have been attending for more than six consecutive months, or have you participated in six fitness competitions during this fiscal year? If so, you can be eligible for a gym reimbursement up to \$180.

The gym reimbursement must be submitted through MUNIS to be processed. To claim reimbursement, employees should submit their itemized receipts dated within the fiscal year or facility statement via MUNIS Self Service (ESS).



Don't Let Severe Weather Take You by Surprise

Severe weather can happen anytime, in any part of the country. Severe weather can include hazardous conditions produced by thunderstorms, including damaging winds, tornadoes, large hail, flooding, and flash flooding.

Know Your Work Area's Emergency Action Plan

Before severe weather strikes, it's important to know where to go and what to do. Take time to review your work area's emergency action plan. It will tell you where to seek shelter. If you work at City Hall, take a moment to look over [City Hall's Emergency Action Plan](#) and find your "safe spot" before severe weather strikes.

Be Informed, Know the Warning Systems

Know how you will receive important information from the Tulsa Area Emergency Management office. When severe weather is in the forecast, stay tuned to local TV or radio stations for emergency information.

Understand the different warning signs:

Tornado Watch – Tornadoes are likely to occur in the watch area. Be ready to act quickly, take shelter and check supply kits. Monitor radio and television stations for more information.

Tornado Warning – Tornadoes are an imminent threat. A tornado has been sighted in the area or has been indicated by radar. Take shelter immediately.

Dress for the Occasion

If severe weather is in the forecast, plan to wear clothes that provide you the best protection. Wear sturdy shoes to protect your feet from debris after the storm. Pack a raincoat and wear pants and long sleeves to protect your skin from debris and other environmental hazards that may result from a severe weather event.

Create a Communications Plan

After a severe weather event, there may be severe damage around the city and to your home and family. If conditions warrant, the mayor may declare a "hazardous condition."

A "hazardous condition" is a situation or condition the mayor finds constitutes an immediate potential threat to the life, health, safety, and/or welfare of city employees or to the life, health, safety, and/or welfare of the inhabitants of the city. Each hazardous condition is a separate and unique condition.

Knowing how to contact loved ones and designating an assembly place is essential. Build a family communications plan, in advance, so that everyone in the household understands where to go after a severe weather event.

For more information on how to build an emergency communication plan, visit, www.ready.gov/plan or download the Tulsa Ready app for your iPhone or Android device. The Tulsa Ready app provide you with an emergency supply kit list, grocery list, and checklists tailored to your needs. You may also access and update your plan as needed.

Prepare for Stress After a Severe Weather Emergency

Coping with the aftermath of a severe weather even can be difficult. Community Care's Employee Assistance Program provides confidential assessment and referral for employees and/or immediate family members who are experiencing personal issues.

You can make a private appointment for any type of personal problem(s) that may be too much to handle alone. **Call CommunityCare EAP at (918) 594-5200.**

