

MU fitness expert creates MyActivity Pyramid to help adults exercise (Video)

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The MyActivity Pyramid offers a visual representation of the new physical activity guidelines from the US Department of Health and Human Services. Credit: University of Missouri Extension Department of Nutritional Sciences

The MyActivity Pyramid, a new fitness guide developed by a University of Missouri Extension fitness specialist, provides physical activity recommendations for adults in a fun and easy-to-understand format.

"The MyActivity Pyramid offers a visual representation of the new physical activity guidelines from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) on the recommended amounts and type of activities for improved health and fitness," said Steve Ball, associate professor of exercise physiology in the College of Human Environmental

Sciences. "The pyramid offers a variety of ways that adults can achieve these recommendations to improve their health and quality of life."

The pyramid is modeled after the U.S. Department of Agriculture's food guide pyramid and is designed for adults ages 18-64. At the base of the pyramid are activities that can be incorporated into everyday routines, including biking, yard work, household chores and walking. The next level includes aerobic activities such as jogging, swimming or tennis.

Adults should aim for 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week or 75 minutes of vigorous activity. For more extensive health benefits and weight-loss, HHS recommends that adults engage in five hours of moderate-intensity aerobic activity per week, or two hours and 30 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity per week.

"Adults should remember that daily exercise does not have to be done in one setting," Ball said. "Adults can divide the 30-minutes-per-day recommendation into three 10-minute sessions."

Strength and flexibility activities are included in the third level of the pyramid. At least twice a week, adults should engage in activities such as yoga, stretching or strength training, Ball said. The top of the pyramid is the smallest part and represents inactivity. Adults should limit the amount of time they spend watching TV or playing video and computer games each day.

"So many people are inactive right now. This is a way to help them get started and let them know how much physical activity they should be doing throughout the week," said Robin Gammon, MU Extension dietitian. "Sixty-six percent of Americans are either overweight or obese, and many people just don't know where to start. Printing the MyActivity Pyramid and posting it at the office or on the refrigerator can help remind people to get up and be active."

The 2008 federal guidelines on physical activity for adults are available online at www.health.gov/PAGuidelines .

To download a free PDF of the MyActivity Pyramid:
[extension.missouri.edu/explore ... e/foodnut/n00388.pdf](http://extension.missouri.edu/explore...e/foodnut/n00388.pdf) .

Source: University of Missouri-Columbia

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