

# What is 'moderate' exercise anyway?

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(HealthDay)—You've probably heard the U.S. National Institutes of Health's recommendation for most adults to get 30 minutes of moderate exercise on most days to stay fit.

But what exactly is moderate? And how do you know if you're working hard or hardly working?

One of the easiest ways to measure the intensity of your workout is with the "talk test." If you're working in the moderate range, you can talk without too much difficulty. But if you can sing, pick up the exercise pace, according to the American College of Cardiology. And if you're doing vigorous activity, you'll be able to say just a few words before pausing for a breath.

Another way to figure out how hard you're working is to monitor your [heart rate](#).

To do this, first figure out your [maximum heart rate](#). Subtract your age from 220. For a 50-year-old, this would be 170 beats per minute. A person's target heart rate for [moderate activity](#) falls between 50 and 70 percent of their maximum heart rate. So, for that 50-year-old, the sweet spot is between 85 and 119 beats per minute.

Once you calculate your own heart rate range on paper, check to see if you're in this range during exercise by stopping to take your pulse for 30 seconds then multiplying that number by 2.

Walking, playing golf—without using a cart—and general gardening are ways to get [moderate exercise](#). Aerobic dancing, jogging and swimming hard all count as [vigorous exercise](#).

If you're pressed for time (and in good shape), doing more strenuous exercise may be the way to go. Vigorous exercisers only need 15 minutes of activity a day to get the same results as moderate movers.

**More information:** To learn more, visit the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

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