



Movement Matters

Physical activity supports nearly every system in the human body. Regular movement helps lower blood pressure, improves cholesterol levels, reduces the risk of heart disease and type 2 diabetes, in addition to supporting healthy weight and reducing anxiety.

Health experts recommend adults incorporate 150 minutes of physical activity each week, which breaks down to 30 minutes a day, five days a week. By following this health guideline, you can expect noticeable results including improved sleep quality, enhanced mood and overall decreased stress levels.

Choose Your Adventure

Some days you'll feel energized and ready to go. Other days, simply showing up is a win—and both truly count. The best plan is the one that fits your life and feels doable.

Below are four 30-minute movement options to inspire you. Feel free to adjust them based on your body, comfort level, and any health conditions. And if you have questions about what's safe for you, checking in with your healthcare provider is always a smart step.

FOR BEGINNERS

The beginner 30-minute plan builds confidence and

consistency. Spend five minutes warming up with marching in place, arm circles, and gentle torso twists. Spend 20 minutes on a simple circuit and repeat twice: chair squats for 10 reps, wall or knee push-ups for eight to 10 reps, step-backs or standing lunges for eight reps per side, rows with a resistance band or light weights for 10 reps, and standing core twists for 10 reps per side. Spend five minutes cooling down with a hamstring stretch, a shoulder stretch, and slow deep breathing.

STEPPING IT UP

The intermediate 30-minute plan incorporates more strength and cardio. Start with five minutes to warm up doing jumping jacks or march-outs, dynamic lunges, and arm swings. Allocate 20 minutes for a circuit repeat two to three times: squats for 12 to 15 reps, push-ups for 10 to 12 reps, reverse lunges for 10 reps per leg, a plank for 30 to 45 seconds, and mountain climbers for 30 seconds. Close with five minutes of hip flexor stretches, chest opening, and slow breathing.

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LOW AND SLOW

The low-impact 30-minute plan supports joints and mobility. Begin with five minutes of neck rolls, shoulder rolls, and ankle circles. Allocate 20 minutes for a gentle flow: sit-to-stand chair squats for 10 reps, side leg lifts for 10 reps per side, wall push-ups for 10 reps, standing balance holds for 30 seconds per leg, plus approximately five minutes of gentle yoga or easy walking. Finish with a seated forward fold, an upper-back stretch with slow breathing.

GET MOVING WITH YOUR FURRY FRIENDS

Pet-powered 30 minutes also counts and includes a major bonus. Aim for 20 to 30 minutes of brisk walking or light jogging with your dog. Add two or three short “strength stops” while your pet is sniffing the environment and commit to doing 10 squats, 10 calf raises, or eight step-backs per side. End with focused stretching or a game of fetch. Regular walking and playing with your pet, may reduce blood pressure levels and elevates mood while supporting mental health. Try this routine and you may experience a closer bond with your beloved pet while enjoying a new routine that feels especially meaningful because you are doing it together.

Picturesque Walkpaths in Cook County

Signing up for an event can make movement feel more fun and less laborious. A few early March options show up on local race calendars, and there are also searchable listings that update regularly. While some runs are free, others require a registration fee which provides swag items and refreshments for participants.

[Peace Runners 773](#) is on a mission to get more people moving in Cook County, and you’re invited to join them! Choose from free workout plans, Couch to 5K challenges, and community runs on the West Side of Chicago.

[The Muddy Miles: A Spirits Run](#) is scheduled for Saturday, March 28, 2026, in Crestwood. This run is a fun, local way to stay active without traveling far.

Race calendars update often, so it helps to browse a trusted list and select what fits your activity preference, neighborhood proximity and your schedule. [RunGuides’ Chicago running calendar](#) is an easy place to explore upcoming options in and around the city and Cook County. Running in the USA also maintains [Upcoming Races in Cook County, IL](#) page that can be useful if you prefer to stay close to home.

If racing isn’t your thing, a “walk and talk” meetup with a friend or coworker works just as well. The goal is a repeatable habit that makes you feel better.

Stick with It at Home

Consistency is made easier by removing friction. Setting out walking shoes the night before helps. Pairing movement with something you already do helps too, like a walk following dinner or stretching right after brushing your teeth. The benefits of short routines compound over time. Ten minutes after breakfast, ten at lunch, and ten after work still adds up to 30.

Family involvement makes it more likely you will follow through. A kitchen dance break counts, and so does a quick walk to the park. Your body does not care if it was “official.”

Well onTarget and Other Benefit Support

[Well onTarget](#) offers tools that can help you stay on track, including digital resources, trackers, and wellness support. Some plans also include fitness program promotions or incentives, so checking your member portal is the best way to see what is available right now.

[CLICK OR TAP!](#)

If stress, low mood, or burnout is making it hard to start, [ComPsych EAP](#) can support you with confidential help and practical coping tools. Movement is powerful, and support can make it easier to begin.

[CLICK OR TAP!](#)

MAKING CONSISTENCY EASIER



One trend that is having a moment is “soft cardio,” sometimes called cozy cardio. It is defined as a gentle, steady pace that raises your heart rate without it feeling punishing and works well for people who want sustainable movement. This can come in the form of a comfortable walk, an easy bike ride, or a treadmill stroll while watching your favorite show. The point is consistency, not intensity.

Another option is rucking, which is walking with added weight in a backpack. It can feel more exhilarating than a regular walk, but it is not for everyone. If you try it, start with light weights and prioritize posture and form first.

 SOURCES: [Centers for Disease Control](#), [GQ Magazine](#)

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