



EFSMA recommends

10 Golden Rules for Healthy Leisure Time Physical Activities, Sports and Lifestyle

Regular physical activity means: Feel good, look good, be fitter, live better and longer.

1. Prior to physical activity have a preparticipation examination (PPE)

Your doctor needs history, physical examination and ECG for PPE, if indicated, exercise testing and echocardiography should be performed.

Especially for beginners or persons returning to sports, persons with known diseases or symptoms, medical conditions or risk factors (e.g. (former) smoking, hypertension, overweight).

First see your sports physician, then start with regular exercise.

2. Start exercising moderately and consciously

Start slowly and increase intensity moderately (first increase duration, then frequency and intensity), if possible with professional guidance (e.g. fitness club, running meet-up group).

Three to four sessions per week are recommended, 30 – 40 minutes each.

3. Avoid overtraining

Moderate exhaustion following sports is correct, but training should be performed without heavily grasping for air. Your physician can help you guide and monitor your training load by testing and recommending the appropriate heart rate for your training, e.g. 50-80 % of your maximum heart rate.

Exercising longer and moderately is more effective than running / swimming / cycling shortly and fiercely. Physical activity and training in general should be fun

4. Recover sufficiently after training

Adequate regeneration and recovery should follow an exercise session, and can be achieved by relaxing and resting, massage, sleeping, maybe sauna. An intense exercise bout should be followed by a moderate to low-intensity session.

5. Interrupt training if an illness or cold are present

When you caught a cold or are suffering from cough, sniffles or hoarseness, fever or acute illness, interrupt your training until full recovery. In case of doubt ask your physician.

6. Prevent and heal injuries

Before starting exercise to warm up. Cool down afterwards with e.g. stretching. ,

Pain is always a warning symptom of the body and needs clarification.

Injuries need time to heal completely. During healing, temporarily try other sports such as swimming, aqua jogging, cycling, or cross training.

7. Adapt sports activity to climate, temperature and environment

“Clothes make the (sports) man”. Sport clothes should be functional, not just fashionable.



Clothing should be light and permeable to air and moisture, always adapted to the weather. In the heat focus on reduced training, light clothing and water intake. In the cold think of warm clothes and wind breakers. In case of air pollution / high ozone levels: reduce training, exercise in the morning or evening.

8. Watch your nutrition and fluid intake

Sports nutrition should be high in carbohydrates, moderate in proteins and low in fat, depending on the performed sports, personal goals and individual body composition. The Mediterranean diet is still recommended. In case of doubt ask your physician or nutritionist. Loss of fluids after exercising, especially in the heat, must be compensated with water and drinks containing electrolytes, such as alcohol free beer.

Consider: Beer is no sports drink, but a beer or a glass of wine once in a while is ok.

9. Adapt physical activity to age and medication

Physical activity in the elderly is strongly recommended, it is appropriate and beneficial. Sports in the aged should be versatile including endurance, strength, mobility and coordinative training. Medication needs to be adapted to activity.

Physical activity is not prohibited in osteoarthritis, but rather of therapeutical value. In any case talk to your physician first.

Fitness is most important in the elderly.

Consider:

Adopt drugs according to your activity. Arthrosis in the joints of legs is no barrier to activity but rather of therapeutic value.

10. Physical activity and sports should be fun

Besides optimal training load, finding the right type of exercise is essential to have fun. Also diversity in sports can be motivating, so explore new sports and change once in a while. Exercising with friends or in a group can also be supportive and fun. Also don't underestimate exercising in your everyday life: climbing stairs instead of using the elevator walking to the supermarket / post office / bakery, especially brisk walking is sport! Aim at more than 10.000 steps a day!

If your regular training routine suddenly becomes painful or too exhausting, consult your physician. Regular health checks, at least every other year, assure health, well-being and physical fitness.

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