

Physical Activity

Objective: *Increase to at least 40% the proportion of people aged 18 and older who engage regularly, preferably daily, in light to moderate physical activity for at least 30 minutes per session.*

The relationships between physical activity and health outcomes are numerous and complex, but there is good epidemiologic evidence that regular physical activity promotes health and reduces the risk of many diseases, including coronary heart disease, hypertension, cancer, osteoporosis, and noninsulin-dependent diabetes mellitus. There are also positive effects on individuals' mental well-being to be gained, such as the alleviation of depression and anxiety. Unfortunately, only about one-third of Virginians surveyed in 1995 indicated that they exercised on a regular basis (3+ times a week, 20+ minutes per session, and at more than 50% of capacity). The benefits to be gained by increasing physical activity are not just personal ones; employers too stand to profit from a healthier workforce. Physically fit adults have a 33% lower work absentee rate than their unfit counterparts and cost approximately \$130 less per year in medical insurance claims. Clearly, one of our most important public health challenges is moving our society from a sedentary one to a more physically active one.

