

How Active Are You?

When it comes to physical activity, understanding your current level of activity is a good first step toward your activity goals. The good news: You may find you're more active than you think. That's because things such as gardening, walking, and mowing the lawn actually count toward your activity goals.

With the tool provided on the next page, simply write down the type of activity, how long you spend doing it, and the effort it takes. Try to assess a full week if you can. Determining how active you are gives you a benchmark. Once you've done this, you may want to try **My 4-Week Activity Planner** available in the Food & Fitness section at MerckEngage.com.

Always check with your health care professional before beginning any activity plan or increasing your activity. It's also important to ask him or her what your target heart rate is to help determine what exercise intensity is appropriate for you.

Your Current Level of Activity

Here's a simple chart to help you track your physical activity for 1 week. Try to record your activities at the end of each day, when they're still fresh in your mind. For more on the 4 types of activity, including examples and an explanation of intensity, see the following page.

Day of the Week	Type of Activity	Duration (in minutes)	Intensity (check 1)
Monday	<input type="checkbox"/> Aerobic _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Strength training _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Balance _____	_____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Light <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> Vigorous <input type="checkbox"/> Light <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> Vigorous
Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Aerobic _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Strength training _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Balance _____	_____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Light <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> Vigorous <input type="checkbox"/> Light <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> Vigorous
Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Aerobic _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Strength training _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Balance _____	_____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Light <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> Vigorous <input type="checkbox"/> Light <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> Vigorous
Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/> Aerobic _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Strength training _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Balance _____	_____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Light <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> Vigorous <input type="checkbox"/> Light <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> Vigorous
Friday	<input type="checkbox"/> Aerobic _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Strength training _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Balance _____	_____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Light <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> Vigorous <input type="checkbox"/> Light <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> Vigorous
Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/> Aerobic _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Strength training _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Balance _____	_____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Light <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> Vigorous <input type="checkbox"/> Light <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> Vigorous
Sunday	<input type="checkbox"/> Aerobic _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Strength training _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Balance _____	_____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Light <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> Vigorous <input type="checkbox"/> Light <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> Vigorous

Understanding Activities and Intensity

Following are brief descriptions of the 4 types of activity and examples of each:

- **Aerobic activity.** Also called endurance activity. Any activity that increases your breathing and heart rate for an extended period of time.
- **Strength training.** Any activity that involves working with weights or doing any other resistance exercise.
- **Flexibility.** Any activity that includes general stretching routines for major muscle and tendon groups. Hold stretches for 10 to 30 seconds and aim for 3 to 4 repetitions of each stretch (with a slight pause between repetitions).
- **Balance.** Any activity that improves leg strength and helps prevent falls. Or simple moves you can do anytime, such as standing on one foot for a few seconds, first on one then the other.

Here are some examples of the 4 types of activity:

Aerobic activity	Strength training	Flexibility	Balance
Walking	Sit-ups	Toe touches	Leg raises
Biking	Push-ups	Torso twists	Knee-to-chest raises
Gardening	Bench presses	Yoga moves	Squats

Intensity explained

Intensity is a measure of how hard you're doing a physical activity. Here's a simple way to measure intensity levels:

- **Light intensity:** You should be able to sing while doing the activity.
- **Moderate intensity:** You should be able to carry on a conversation comfortably while engaging in the activity.
- **Vigorous intensity:** You may become winded or too out of breath to carry on a conversation.

To help you stay focused as you become more active, try **My 4-Week Activity Planner** in the Food & Fitness section at MerckEngage.com.

Questions to Ask Your Health Care Professional

- Am I healthy enough to exercise?
- Are there any activities I should avoid?
- Are there any particular activities you would recommend?