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ACSM, AHA SUPPORT FEDERAL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

U.S. recommendations reflect previously published ACSM/AHA guidelines

INDIANAPOLIS/DALLAS – Guidelines for physical activity released today by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) were met with support from the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) and the American Heart Association (AHA). The organizations, which jointly published physical activity recommendations last year, attended today's announcement and said the guidelines effectively support each other and are all based on the most relevant science that links physical activity to improved health and wellness.

ACSM/AHA guidelines focus on 30 minutes of moderate-intensity daily physical activity five days a week. HHS guidelines call for a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate physical activity a week, an amount most reasonable on five days a week at a duration of 30 minutes.

The associations note that the core recommendation as it relates to health gains of physical activity are highly consistent. In both the ACSM/AHA guidelines, and those released today by HHS, the latest science was evaluated to understand the physiological mechanisms by which physical activity provides health benefits and the physical activity profile (type, intensity, amount) that is associated with enhanced health and quality of life.

Both sets of recommendations conclude that relatively modest amounts of physical activity will improve health and cardiorespiratory fitness of inactive persons, while expanded health gains, such as weight loss or weight maintenance, may require more than a minimum 30 minutes of moderate activity most days of the week. In general, there are more agreements than differences when it comes to physical activity recommendations. Differences on "minutes-per-day" or "days per week" recommendations appear because they are intended for different groups, and may be age-specific or relevant to overweight or obese individuals.

"Guidelines for physical activity have long been based on research demonstrating that even relatively moderate amounts of physical activity will have positive benefits on health," said William Haskell, Ph.D., FACSM, lead author of the ACSM/AHA guidelines. "A very important idea, especially for people who are inactive, is that health and physical activity are closely linked. The more days a week that you can be active or accumulate some activity, the higher the value for your health and wellness."

ACSM and AHA emphasize that beginning an exercise program is the most important public health message when it comes to physical activity guidelines. Physical activity for at least 30 minutes a day, consistent with ACSM/AHA and federal recommendations, or accumulating a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate activity a week, has been shown to have substantial health benefits.

"Numerous studies now suggest that if we can simply move people out of the lowest levels of cardiorespiratory fitness, it can have a profound (and beneficial) impact on public health", says Barry A. Franklin, PhD, national American Heart Association spokesperson and Director of Cardiac Rehabilitation and Exercise Laboratories at William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, Michigan.

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About the American College of Sports Medicine

ACSM is the largest sports medicine and exercise science organization in the world. More than 20,000 international, national, and regional members are dedicated to advancing and integrating scientific research to provide educational and practical applications of exercise science and sports medicine.

About the American Heart Association

Founded in 1924, the American Heart Association today is the nation's oldest and largest voluntary health organization dedicated to reducing disability and death from diseases of the heart and stroke. These diseases, America's No. 1 and No. 3 killers, and all other cardiovascular diseases claim nearly 870,000 lives a year. In fiscal year 2005–06 the association invested over \$543 million in research, professional and public education, advocacy and community service programs to help all Americans live longer, healthier lives. To learn more, call 1-800-AHA-USA1 or visit americanheart.org.

Editor's Note: ACSM/AHA guidelines published jointly in *Medicine & Science in Sports and Exercise*[®], ACSM's official journal and *Circulation*, a journal of the American Heart Association in August 2007. For more information or additional details on the physical activity guidelines, please visit www.americanheart.org/fitness or www.acsm.org/physicalactivity. Media may access the original press release [here](#) for additional information.

AHA Editor's Note: In January 2007, the American Heart Association introduced Start!, a national campaign calling on all Americans and their employers to create a culture of physical activity and health to live longer, heart-healthy lives. Through active, year-round participation in walking, Start! supports the mission of the American Heart Association, to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and stroke. To learn more, call 1-800-AHA-USA1 or visit americanheart.org/start.

ACSM Editor's Note: The American College of Sports Medicine has launched new resources, accessible at www.acsm.org/physicalactivity, to help the public better understand physical activity guidelines and customize a program for their individual activity needs at no cost.