

Fitness Glossary of Terms

A

Aerobic physical activity. Activity in which the body's large muscles move in a rhythmic manner for a sustained period of time. Aerobic activity, also called endurance activity, improves cardiorespiratory fitness. Examples include walking, running, and swimming, and bicycling.

B

Balance. A performance-related component of physical fitness that involves the maintenance of the body's equilibrium while stationary or moving.

Balance training. Static and dynamic exercises that are designed to improve individuals' ability to withstand challenges from postural sway or destabilizing stimuli caused by self-motion, the environment, or other objects.

Baseline activity. The light-intensity activities of daily life, such as standing, walking slowly, and lifting lightweight objects. People who do only baseline activity are considered to be inactive.

Bone-strengthening activity. Physical activity primarily designed to increase the strength of specific sites in bones that make up the skeletal system. Bone strengthening activities produce an impact or tension force on the bones that promotes bone growth and strength. Running, jumping rope, and lifting weights are examples of bone-strengthening activities.

D

Duration. The length of time in which an activity or exercise is performed. Duration is generally expressed in minutes.

E

Exercise. A subcategory of physical activity that is planned, structured, repetitive, and purposive in the sense that the improvement or maintenance of one or more components of physical fitness is the objective. "Exercise" and "exercise training" frequently are used interchangeably and generally refer to physical activity performed during leisure time with the primary purpose of improving or maintaining physical fitness, physical performance, or health.

F

Flexibility. A health- and performance

-related component of physical fitness that is the range of motion possible at a joint. Flexibility is specific to each joint and depends on a number of specific variables, including but not limited to the tightness of

specific ligaments and tendons. Flexibility exercises enhance the ability of a joint to move through its full range of motion.

Frequency. The number of times an exercise or activity is performed. Frequency is generally expressed in sessions, episodes, or bouts per week.

H

Health. A human condition with physical, social and psychological dimensions, each characterized on a continuum with positive and negative poles. Positive health is associated with a capacity to enjoy life and to withstand challenges; it is not merely the absence of disease. Negative health is associated with illness, and in the extreme, with premature death.

Health-enhancing physical activity. Activity that, when added to baseline activity, produces health benefits. Brisk walking, jumping rope, dancing, playing tennis or soccer, lifting weights, climbing on playground equipment at recess, and doing yoga are all examples of health-enhancing physical activity.

I

Intensity. Intensity refers to how much work is being performed or the magnitude of the effort required to perform an activity or exercise.

L

Lifestyle activities. This term is frequently used to encompass activities that a person carries out in the course of daily life and that can contribute to sizeable energy expenditure. Examples include taking the stairs instead of using the elevator, walking to do errands instead of driving, getting off a bus one stop early, or parking farther away than usual to walk to a destination.

M

MET. MET refers to metabolic equivalent, and 1 MET is the rate of energy expenditure while sitting at rest. It is taken by convention to be an oxygen uptake of 3.5 milliliters per kilogram of body weight per minute. Physical activities frequently are classified by their intensity using the MET as a reference.

Moderate-intensity physical activity. On an absolute scale, physical activity that is done at 3.0 to 5.9 times the intensity of rest. On a scale relative to an individual's personal capacity, moderate-intensity physical activity is usually a 5 or 6 on a scale of 0 to 10.

Muscle-strengthening activity (strength training, resistance training, or muscular strength and endurance exercises). Physical activity, including exercise that increases skeletal muscle strength, power, endurance, and mass.

P

Physical activity. Any bodily movement produced by the contraction of skeletal muscle that increases energy expenditure above a basal level. In these Guidelines, physical activity generally refers to the subset of physical activity that enhances health.

Physical fitness. The ability to carry out daily tasks with vigor and alertness, without undue fatigue, and with ample energy to enjoy leisure-time pursuits and respond to emergencies. Physical fitness includes a number of components consisting of cardiorespiratory endurance (aerobic power), skeletal muscle endurance, skeletal muscle strength, skeletal muscle power, flexibility, balance, speed of movement, reaction time, and body composition.

Progression. The process of increasing the intensity, duration, frequency, or amount of activity or exercise as the body adapts to a given activity pattern.

R

Repetitions. The number of times a person lifts a weight in muscle-strengthening activities. Repetitions are analogous to duration in aerobic activity.

S

Strength. A health and performance component of physical fitness that is the ability of a muscle or muscle group to exert force.

V

Vigorous-intensity physical activity. On an absolute scale, physical activity that is done at 6.0 or more times the intensity of rest. On a scale relative to an individual's personal capacity, vigorous-intensity physical activity is usually a 7 or 8 on a scale of 0 to 10.