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NEWS RELEASE

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ACTIVE AT ANY SIZE

If you are a very large person, you can still be physically active. Very large people face special challenges in trying to be active. You may not be able to bend or move in the same way that other people can. It may be hard to find clothes and equipment for exercising. You may feel self-conscious being active around other people. Facing these challenges is hard—but it can be done! A new booklet available from Weight-control Information Network can help you start being more active and healthier—no matter what your size.

Exercise or physical activity does not have to be hard or boring to be good for you. Anything that gets you moving around—even for only a few minutes a day—is a healthy start to getting more fit.

Do I need to see my health care provider before I start exercising? You should see your doctor if:

- ◆ you have not been active for years
- ◆ you are active now and are changing from a moderate to a more intense activity
- ◆ you have diabetes, heart disease, or high blood pressure
- ◆ you have arthritis or an injury (like a knee injury).

To start being more active and keep at it:

- ◆ Start slowly. Your body needs time to get used to your new activity.
- ◆ Warm up. Warm-ups get your body ready for action. Shrug your shoulders, tap your toes, swing your arms, or march in place. You should spend a few minutes warming up for any activity—even walking.
- ◆ Cool down. Slow down little by little. If you have been walking fast, walk slower to cool down. Or stretch for a few minutes. Cooling down may protect your heart, relax your muscles, and keep you from getting hurt.
- ◆ Set goals. Set short-term and long-term goals. A short-term goal may be to walk 5 minutes at least 3 days for 1 week. A long-term goal may be to walk 30 minutes most days of the week by the end of 6 months.
- ◆ Track progress. Keep a journal of your activity. You may not feel like you are making progress but when you look back at where you started, you may be pleasantly surprised!
- ◆ Fit activity into your daily life. Plan ahead and try to be active when it works best for you.
- ◆ Get support. Get a family member or friend to be active with you. It may be more fun, and an exercise buddy can cheer you on.
- ◆ Have fun! Try different activities to find the ones you really enjoy.

You may want to start with non-weight bearing activities, like swimming or chair dancing, because these activities put less stress on your joints. If your feet or joints hurt when you stand, non-weight bearing activities may be best for you. Weight bearing activities, like walking, bowling, and golfing involve lifting or pushing your own body weight.

For more information and a copy of the booklet “Active at Any Size” (NIH Publication No. 00-4352) contact the Weight-control Information Network, 1 Win Way, Bethesda, MD 20892-3665, Email: win@info.niddk.nih.gov, Toll-free number: 1-877-946-4627 or find the publication online at <http://www.niddk.nih.gov/health/nutrit/nutrit.htm> The booklet includes a list of good resources including videos, websites, publications and organizations.

Source: Weight-control Information Network, <http://www.niddk.nih.gov/health/nutrit/activeatanysize/active.html>