

How to measure physical activity

Physical activity can be measured in **metabolic equivalents** or METs. One MET is the energy expended while sitting at rest. The MET value of activity and exercise is calculated relative to rest.

MET values show the **intensity** of an activity. An activity with a MET value of 5 means you're expending five times the energy and calories than you would while at rest.



Increasing your weekly METs can substantially improve your health. Physical therapists can explain METs and help you develop a training programme to reach your target safely.

Example: Walking at a pace equivalent to 5 METs for 30 minutes: 5 METs x 30 mins = 150 MET mins

Current WHO guidelines = **600 – 1200 MET minutes** per week

New recommendations show most health gains occur when people achieve **3000 to 4000 MET minutes** per week

MET values

| | | |
|--|--------------------------------|-----|
|  | Cycling (moderate) | 7.5 |
|  | Cycling (vigorous, eg up hill) | 14 |
|  | Jogging/brisk walking | 6 |
|  | Running | 8 |
|  | General gardening/housework | 4 |
|  | Skiping | 11 |
|  | Walking up stairs | 5 |
|  | Pilates/Tai chi | 3 |
|  | Resistance/weight training | 5 |

How to achieve your METs

a weekly example

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|------------------|
| Running (8 METs) | 2 x 30 mins = 60 mins x 8 METs | 480 METs |
| Brisk walking (6 METs) | 14 x 15 mins* = 210 mins x 6 METs <small>*2 x 15 mins per day</small> | 1260 METs |
| Resistance/weights (5 METs) | 2 x 30 mins = 60 mins x 5 METs | 300 METs |
| Housework/gardening (4 METs) | 4 hrs per wk = 240 mins x 4 METs | 960 METs |
| Dancing/aerobics (8 METs) | 1 hour = 60 mins x 8 METs | 480 METs |
| Team sports (eg football) (7 METs) | 1 hour = 60 mins x 7 METs | 520 METs |

TOTAL: 3900 METs

Contact a physical therapist – the qualified experts in movement and exercise