The more research teaches us about exercise, the more we realize the countless ways it impacts our health. True, if weight loss is the goal, nutrition plays a larger role. But we're learning that even micro-workouts can boost metabolism, walking just three times per week can lower dementia risk, and being active can counteract the negative impacts of a sleep deficit.

And now, we have even more evidence that exercise may help reduce cancer risk—and we also have more details about the exact amount that could move the needle. More than 46,000 cases of cancer in the U.S. alone could potentially be prevented annually if we meet the American Cancer Society's physical activity guidelines of 5 hours per week of moderate-intensity movement, according to research published in the journal *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*. (BTW, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention...
defines brisk walking, water aerobics, mowing the lawn, riding a bike on a flat path and other similar activities as "moderate."

The research, helmed by Adair Minihan, M.P.H., at the American Cancer Society, is the first study of its kind to estimate the amount of cancer cases per state that could be linked to physical inactivity based on cancer sites (breast, endometrial, colon, stomach, kidney, esophageal adenocarcinoma and urinary bladder). About 3% of all U.S. cancer cases in adults 30 years or older are related to inactivity, they found.

These states had the highest amount of cancers related to physical inactivity:

- Kentucky
- West Virginia
- Louisiana
- Tennessee
- Mississippi

The states with the lowest amount of cancers related to physical inactivity:

- Utah
- Montana
- Wyoming
- Washington
- Wisconsin

Related: These Are the 5 Best Exercises for Your Health, According to a Harvard Doctor

"These findings underscore the need to encourage physical activity as a means of cancer prevention and implement individual- and community-level interventions that address the various behavioral and socioeconomic barriers to recreational physical activity," the authors tell the American Cancer Society Press Room. "Understanding and reducing the behavioral and socioeconomic barriers to physical activity is essential for optimizing intervention strategies targeting at-risk groups across the country."
That last point is vital, the researchers say. The data clearly proves that 5 hours of moderate exercise per week is beneficial in decreasing risk for several common cancers. But the data doesn't explain how to make that activity happen.
"There are many barriers to recreational physical activity, which include, but are not limited to, lack of time due to long working hours in low-wage jobs, the cost of gym memberships or personal equipment, lack of access to a safe environment in which to be active and potential childcare costs involved with recreational physical activity," the researchers say. "Unfortunately, these barriers are more likely to affect historically marginalized populations, including the Black population and individuals with a limited income, underscoring the importance of enhancing health equity."

These systemic changes will take time, but for now, a great place to start is with this 10-minute equipment-free home workout plan to build strength if you're looking for a safe and effective first step.

Up Next: Yes, You Can Exercise When You Have Literally No Time—Here's How to Hack Your Fitness Routine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Moderate-intensity aerobic activity</strong></th>
<th><strong>Muscle-strengthening activity</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Anything that gets your heart beating faster counts.</td>
<td>Do activities that make your muscles work harder than usual.</td>
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<td><img src="image" alt="150 minutes a week" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="2 days a week" /></td>
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Break it up over the whole week however you want!