

## Q. How much do I need to exercise to lose weight?

**A.** When it comes to losing weight, exercising about 60 minutes a day at least five days a week will give you the most benefit.

If you exercise more than 60 minutes a day, you can expect even greater weight-loss results. But it's not recommended or realistic for most people. For example, on *The Biggest Loser* television show, the overweight participants exercise for at least four hours a day. Over several months, they often lose over 100 pounds. But it's done with a very controlled diet and close supervision by fitness trainers and doctors.

Fortunately, you don't have to exercise that much to lose weight. But you will need to work up a sweat to get results.

If you want to lose weight, take a look at your exercise habits and your diet. And set a goal to lose one to two pounds a week. A pound of fat is equal to 3,500 calories. You can eliminate some of these calories by eating more healthy foods. You'll also want to eat fewer sweets, soft drinks, and processed foods. But to speed up the weight loss process, you'll need to make time to exercise a total of 60 minutes a day.

If you walked at a brisk pace for one hour you would burn about 300 calories. And if you limited your daily calorie intake by another 300 calories, it would take you about 10 weeks to lose 10 pounds.

**Find out how many calories you burn when you exercise**  
<http://tinyurl.com/ykwtyaf>



Many people find it challenging to stick with an exercise program. **If you need a little help and motivation to be active for 60 minutes a day, try:**

- ✓ Working out with a training partner
- ✓ Attending group exercise classes
- ✓ Hiring a personal trainer
- ✓ Asking your family and friends for support
- ✓ Setting a specific time of day to exercise
- ✓ Walking during your lunch break
- ✓ Changing your walking route or exercise routine
- ✓ Using a journal, smartphone, or online tools to track your progress

Higher intensity exercise such as jogging, swimming, and cycling will help you burn more calories in less time. But if you try to take off weight too fast – that is, more than a few pounds a week – your body might feel starved. And your energy level might drop as a result. Also, too much exercise too soon could lead to an overuse injury. If you've been sedentary, your initial exercise routine should be done at an easy to moderate pace. Then gradually increase the intensity and amount of time you exercise. As your fitness improves, you'll be lighter, leaner, and healthier.

Sources:  
*American College of Sports Medicine.*  
*National Institutes of Health.*  
*Dietary Guidelines for Americans.*

