

Time to lace up those sneakers, America. A new study by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has found that only 23% of Americans get enough exercise.

What does “enough” mean? The government’s recommended physical activity guidelines call for healthy adults to do a minimum of two and a half hours of moderate intensity activity - or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity – plus at least two muscle strengthening days a week.

OSF HealthCare Exercise Physiologist Michael Johnson says this lack of movement has a giant ripple effect across the country.

“We’re seeing that there’s an increase in disease process as far as cardiovascular disease. We’re seeing an increase in diabetes, obesity, and all that can be linked to a lack of exercise or even a lack of physical activity. And as we’re going to see that, we’re going to see health care costs rise, and quality of life decline,” said Johnson.

Johnson says there are hurdles people face when starting an exercise routine. A lack of time, motivation or interest top the list.

He recommends scheduling exercise as part of your day. Johnson says even turning on music and dancing with your family can count toward activity goals.

When it comes to motivation, finding a workout partner can bring accountability to your plan.

And as for lack of interest, Johnson says plenty of people find exercise boring, but that just means they need to switch up what they do.

“Find something that you enjoy doing,” he advised. “If you don’t like walking on a treadmill for 30 minutes, don’t walk on a treadmill for 30 minutes. You can get up and dance. You can go for a walk. Take your dog for a walk. You can get in the pool; a lot of people enjoy swimming. You just have to find something you like doing. If you like playing volleyball, go play volleyball. Do something more than you’re currently doing.”

Johnson says that no matter what you find works for you, exercise is worth it. It improves both physical and mental health, fighting ailments like cardiovascular disease and depression.

“Exercise is good. That goes without saying, and kind of our motto around here is that if exercise was a drug that could be prescribed it would be the most powerful and the most prescribed drug out there.”