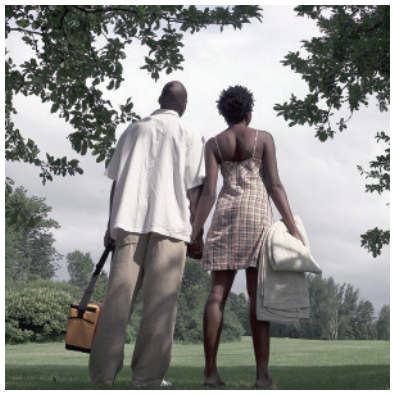
America On the Move

# Home Physical Activity Environment Audit



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# Home Physical Activity Environment Audit

This is a tool that will help you assess your surroundings and learn how your environment can affect your physical activity habits. Use this tool to help you shape your current physical activity environment and discover ways to make improvements in and around your home that will make it a more appealing place for you and others to be active.

For maximum effectiveness, review the tips provided for each question. You will find new ideas on how to make the most of your environment and be physically active.

## Instructions:

1. All questions are answered by choosing A, B, or C.
2. If you feel a question does not apply to you, do not record an answer. That question will not be counted toward your total score.
3. To score your audit, total the number of A's, B's, and C's you have answered.
4. Read the description that corresponds to your score and review the tips provided.

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**1** **Please place a check beside the following items you have in or around your home.**

____ Clothing appropriate for exercise (e.g. offers easy movement)
____ Walking/running/cross-training shoes
____ Exercise equipment (e.g. treadmill, weights, exercise ball, exercise video)
____ Recreational equipment (e.g. tennis racket, football, golf clubs, kite, jump rope)
____ Bicycle
____ Boating equipment (e.g. canoe, kayak)
____ A dog
____ Schedule of exercise classes held at the local recreation center
____ Calendar/notebook dedicated for an exercise log
____ Stairs
____ Pedometer (step counter)
____ Yard space
____ Sidewalks
____ Street lighting
____ Pedestrian crossings
____ Bicycle lane
____ Nature trail
____ Park
____ Recreation center
____ Swimming pool
____ Creek/river/lake
____ Public transportation (e.g. bus stop) nearby

____ **Total number of checks**

**Please add your total for #1 to the chart below.**

A 15 to 22 of the above items checked
B 7 to 14 of the above items checked
C 0 to 6 of the above items checked

★ **Please check the column that best describes you, your home, your choices.**

| **Question** (Question 1 is from the above check list). | A=Always | B=Sometimes | C=Never |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 **Items you have in or around your home.** | 15 to 22 | 7 to 14 | 0 to 6 |
| 2 **Can you take advantage of the exercise benefits of staircases in or close to your home? For example, can you walk upstairs to get a drink of water even if there is a refrigerator in the basement where you are working or watching television?** | | | |

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| Question | A=Always | B=Sometimes | C=Never |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 Do you have audio/video equipment available to help you exercise? For example, do you watch exercise videos or listen to a stereo while being active? | | | |
| 4 Do you minimize using energy saving devices so that you use more energy doing the job by hand? For example, do you get off the couch to change the channel on your television or turn off the self propel option on your lawn mower? | | | |
| 5 Do you have yard space available for exercise? For example, do you garden, chop wood, or use the space for other forms of exercise? | | | |
| 6 Are there sidewalks around your home you can use to be active? | | | |
| 7 Are the sidewalks around your home in good condition? For example, is it easy to skate, bike, or walk on the sidewalks? | | | |
| 8 Is there adequate street lighting in your neighborhood? | | | |
| 9 Are there sufficient pedestrian crossings for busy streets in your neighborhood? | | | |
| 10 Do you feel safe walking in your neighborhood? | | | |
| 11 Are there adequate signs showing bicycle lanes and bicycle routes in your neighborhood? | | | |
| 12 Do you use nature trails close to your home for walking or bicycling? | | | |

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| Question | A=Always | B=Sometimes | C=Never |
|---|---|---|---|
| 13 Do you use a local recreation center and/or swimming pool? | | | |
| 14 Do you use a local park, playground, and/or sports field for physical activity? | | | |
| 15 Do you use a creek, river, and/or lake close to your home for physical activity? | | | |
| 16 Do you travel to destinations in your neighborhood or in nearby neighborhoods by walking or bicycling? | | | |
| 17 Are you aware of the transit stops (e.g. bus, light rail) locations around your home? | | | |
| 18 Do you minimize using drive through services so that you use more energy getting out of your car? For example, do you wash your car by hand, walk inside to do banking and dry cleaning, and enter food restaurants rather than ordering from the car? | | | |
| 19 Do you have a companion that participates in physical activity with you? | | | |
| Totals for questions 1-19 | _____ A | _____ B | _____ C |

See scoring on page 6 and tips for each question beginning on page 7.

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# Home Physical Activity Environment Audit

## Scoring for questions 1-19 :

### If you chose mostly A's ☆☆☆

Your surrounding physical activity environment supports a healthy lifestyle. Continue to make use of things in and around your home to remain physically active. Also, try helping others in your home make physical activity a part of their routine. Compare your answers with the tips provided to see if there are new ways to better your physical activity environment.

### If you chose mostly B's ☆☆

There are parts of your physical activity environment that support a healthy lifestyle. However, some parts may need improvement. Review your answers and the tips provided to see how you can achieve a healthier physical activity environment in and around your home.

### If you chose mostly C's ☆

The environment around your home, or the way you are using your environment, needs improvement. Environments that make it difficult to be physically active can often be changed or enhanced. See the tips provided for some suggestions on how to change and make better use of your environment.

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# Home Physical Activity Environment Audit Tips

## Question 1

**Items In and Around Your Home-** An environment that supports physical activity can help you achieve a more active lifestyle. Make sure you have clothing appropriate for exercise and good walking shoes so that physical activity is comfortable. An accurate, reliable step counter can tell you your number of steps per day and can be used to motivate you to walk more. Exercise and recreational equipment can encourage activity, but some of these items may be expensive. If purchasing these items is not an option for you, look for alternatives such as using canned goods instead of hand weights. Also, walking around the block or walking your dog gives you the same benefits as walking on a treadmill. In addition, keeping a schedule of recreation center classes or devoting a calendar/notebook for a physical activity log will help keep you motivated.

The environment around your home provides plenty of opportunities for physical activity. Staircases, yard space, sidewalks, nature trails, parks, recreation centers, pools, and lakes all support physical activity. Continue reading for more detailed tips related to these.

## Question 2

**Staircases-** Stair climbing is a great form of exercise and you can incorporate this activity into your daily routine without difficulty. For example, if you are taking a load of laundry down or up the stairs, make two or three trips rather than one for extra activity. If you don't have a staircase, you can still make multiple trips from room to room to get some extra steps.

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# Home Physical Activity Environment Audit Tips

## Question 3

**Audio Equipment-** Instead of being sedentary in front of the television, use it to your advantage by riding a stationary bike or walking on a treadmill while watching your favorite show. You can also do strength training, sit-ups, or other exercises while watching TV. Purchasing exercise videos is also a good way to use your television to stay active. In the very least, take a walk around the house during commercial breaks. Remember, small changes make a big difference.

## Question 4

**Energy Saving Devices-** Increasing your daily physical activity is easy when you incorporate small changes into your routine. Simple changes, such as minimizing remote control use, allow for more activity and don't take a lot of time.

## Question 5

**Yard Space-** Your yard is an excellent place for physical activity. Any movement you do while gardening, chopping wood, shoveling snow, or mowing counts as physical activity. Try to incorporate some of these activities into your lifestyle. Also, the spaciousness of a yard provides an excellent location for exercises such as jumping rope or jumping jacks.

## Question 6

**Sidewalks-** Sidewalks provide a safe way to be physically active in your neighborhood. Use them to take walks or skate around your neighborhood. You can also use the sidewalk to encourage your family to be active by playing hopscotch or jump rope.

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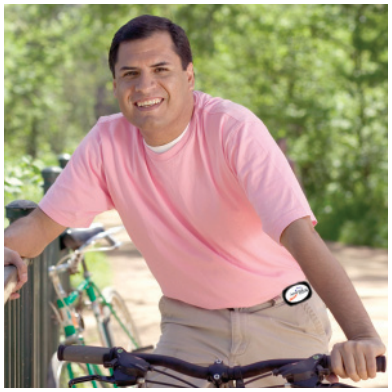
# Home Physical Activity Environment Audit Tips



## Questions 7, 8, 9 and 10

**Safety-** Feeling safe while being active is important. If sidewalks, street lighting, or pedestrian crossings around your home are in poor condition or do not exist, contact your city officials for improvements or additions. Also, invite several friends or family to join you for a walk around the neighborhood. It's always better to travel in pairs or groups. If you're out at night, make sure you wear bright clothing and reflective gear.

## Question 11

**Bicycle Lanes and Routes-** Bicycling is a fun physical activity and is safest when there are clearly marked bicycle lanes and routes in and around your neighborhood. If bicycle lanes in your neighborhood are not satisfactory, contact your city officials to discuss improvements.

## Questions 12, 13, 14 and 15

**Nature Trails, Recreation Centers, Parks, and Lakes-** If there are trails designated for walking or bicycling around your home, take advantage of them! This same tip applies for recreation centers, pools, parks, or lakes. Do some research to see if any of these are close to your home and go try them out. Motivate your family and friends to join you by creating an activity club or organizing a picnic and soccer game in the park.

## Question 16

**Destinations-** There may be several destinations that are within walking distance from your home. Walk or bike to the corner store or local coffee shop rather than driving. Not only will you benefit from the activity, you'll appreciate the money saved on fuel and enjoy some fresh air.

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# Home Physical Activity Environment Audit Tips

## Question 17

**Transit Stops-** Becoming aware of the transit stops near your home can encourage physical activity. Do some research to see if there are ways to travel to work or other locations via mass transit. Then, walk or bike to a transit stop to add more activity to your day while enjoying a break from traffic.

## Question 18

**Drive Through Services-** Minimize use of drive through services to add activity to your daily routine. The energy used when parking your car and walking into the bank, dry cleaning shop, or fast food restaurant will add up at the end of the day. Also, wash your car by hand rather than driving through a car wash. This allows you to save money as well!

## Question 19

**Support-** Physical activity may be more enjoyable for you if you have a partner or companion to be active with. Find someone that supports physical activity and look for ways to motivate one another to be active everyday. Try new activities together and encourage others to join in on your fun!

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