Beginner Movement for Weight Loss

A beginner home routine | No gym or floor exercises required

Movement supports health, and strength activity helps support muscle during weight loss. Begin with a manageable amount. You do not need to finish a 30-minute workout on day one. [1,2]

Your starting plan

Activity	Start here	Build when comfortable
Walking or other easy movement	5-10 minutes on 3 days each week. Shorter sessions count.	Add a few minutes to one session at a time, then add days.
Strength routine on page 2	Two nonconsecutive days, such as Monday and Thursday. Begin with 1 set.	Build repetitions first; then add a second set or light resistance. Change one thing at a time.
Warm-up and cool-down	March gently or walk for 3-5 minutes before. Slow down for 2-3 minutes after.	Keep both as the workout gets longer.

A sample week

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Strength	5-10 min walk	Rest or easy movement	Strength	5-10 min walk	5-10 min walk	Rest

Repeat this week as needed. You can swap days, take more breaks, or split walking into shorter sessions.

How hard should it feel

Start at a comfortable pace. For moderate walking, the talk test is useful: you can talk but not sing. Slow down if you cannot speak comfortably. During strength moves, use a controlled pace and breathe out as you push or lift; avoid holding your breath. [2,3]

Your longer-term goal

Most adults work toward **150 minutes of moderate activity each week** and **strength activity on at least 2 days**. This is a goal to build toward; some movement is better than none. Over time, strength activity should work all major muscle groups. [2]

Choose a plan your body can tolerate

Use a sturdy chair without wheels and a stable support. If you have an injury, recent surgery, balance problems, or medical exercise restrictions, ask the team which movements fit your situation. Skip any movement that causes pain.

Stop for sharp pain, dizziness, or unusual shortness of breath. **Call 911** for chest pain, fainting, or severe trouble breathing. Avoid exercise when vomiting, dehydrated, or unable to eat adequately. If you use insulin or another medicine that can cause low blood sugar, follow your glucose and activity plan.

Your Home Strength Routine

Start with one set | Try 6-8 controlled repetitions of each move

Warm up first. Rest 30-60 seconds, or longer if needed, between moves. For side-to-side exercises, start with 6 repetitions per side. It is fine to begin with only the first three moves.

1 Chair sit-to-stand

Place a sturdy chair against a wall. Sit near the front, feet flat. Lean forward slightly and stand; slowly sit back down.

Make it easier: Use your hands on the armrests for help.

2 Wall push-up

Face a wall with hands at shoulder height. Step back slightly. Bend elbows to bring your chest toward the wall, then push away. Keep your body in a straight line.

Make it easier: Stand closer to the wall.

3 Supported row

Place one hand on a stable counter. Hinge forward slightly with a neutral back. Hold a light water bottle in the other hand; pull your elbow toward your hip, then lower slowly. Switch sides.

Make it easier: Use a lighter bottle or rehearse without weight.

4 Side leg raise

Stand tall holding a counter or sturdy chair. Lift one leg a short distance to the side, toes forward. Lower slowly without leaning. Switch sides.

Make it easier: Use a smaller range of movement.

5 Supported calf raise

Hold a stable counter. Rise slowly onto the balls of both feet, then lower your heels with control.

Make it easier: Sit in a sturdy chair and raise your heels instead.

6 Seated knee lift

Sit tall in a sturdy chair with feet flat. Gently tighten your abdomen; lift one knee a little, lower, and alternate. Keep breathing and avoid leaning back.

Make it easier: Lift the foot only an inch or alternate lifting each heel.

Progress without rushing

When the routine feels comfortable with good form and no pain, work toward 8-12 repetitions. Then consider a second set or slightly more resistance. Keep at least a day between strength sessions. Stop before your technique breaks down.

Afterward: Walk slowly for 2-3 minutes and stretch gently if comfortable. Drink fluids and continue your regular nutrition plan. More exercise does not replace eating enough.

Your Weekly Movement Plan

Plan a small step. Notice what you can repeat.

Week of: _____ **My walking goal:** _____
My two strength days: _____ **My easiest starting move:** _____

Day	Activity I plan	Minutes / sets	How it felt
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

A quick check after each session

Could I move with control and keep breathing? Did anything hurt? Was this amount manageable enough to repeat? Adjust the next session if needed.

Count progress beyond the scale

Look for everyday changes: walking a little longer, getting up from a chair more easily, using better form, or recovering comfortably. Consistency matters more than matching someone else's workout.

This week went well because:

_____

Next week I will:

_____

If you miss a session: Resume with the next manageable session. You do not need to make up missed activity with an exhausting workout.

Sources

[1] NIDDK. Eating and Physical Activity to Lose or Maintain Weight. [2] CDC. Adult Activity: An Overview. [3] CDC. Measuring Physical Activity Intensity.

General adult education. This starter routine can be adjusted to your ability and medical restrictions; it does not replace individualized rehabilitation or exercise instruction.