

How to Assess Your Activity Level to More Accurately Calculate Your TDEE

by Kristina Rattet, Pn1, NCCPT, CLC, CN, CPPC

As mamas, we are definitely busy. But how exactly does “busy” translate into “activity”?
Use this guide to help you to more accurately estimate your

Sedentary

Consider your lifestyle to be sedentary if your days mostly include activities of daily living (shopping, house cleaning, watering plants, taking out the trash, walking the dog, gardening, and playing with/rocking/feeding your baby), plus:



- No moderate or vigorous activities.
- Formal exercise or activity of less than 20 minutes, and may include yoga, body weight exercise, or pilates.
- Spending most of the day sitting (e.g. desk job, bed rest, recovering from surgery or major injury/ailment/sickness)
- Some stroller walks, but usually averaging fewer than 3,000 steps per day
- The majority of new moms prior to returning to formal exercise will be considered sedentary.

Lightly Active

Consider your lifestyle to be Lightly Active if your days mostly include activities of daily living (shopping, house cleaning, watering plants, taking out the trash, walking the dog, gardening, and playing with/rocking/feeding your baby), plus:



- Daily walks at a brisk pace (but you can hold a normal conversation) that are at least 30-minutes in length. Your daily step count will be around 3,500-5,000 per day.
- 1 to 3 days of formal exercise or physical activity (e.g. brisk walking, jogging, hiking, gardening, raking, light or body weight exercise, yoga, pilates, or very heavy cleaning) per week in the range of 45 to 60 minutes where rate of breathing is notably increased but conversation is manageable. Heart rate may fall between 115-130 BPM.
- Spending a good part of the day on your feet (e.g. preschool teacher, nurse, doctor, physical therapist, etc.)

Moderately Active

Consider your lifestyle to be Moderately Active if your days mostly include activities of daily living (shopping, house cleaning, watering plants, taking out the trash, walking the dog, gardening, and playing with/rocking/feeding your baby), plus:



- 3-5 formal exercise or physical activity (e.g. running, weight lifting, circuit training, CrossFit, high-intensity body weight/weight/resistance bands, spin/cycling, or group fitness classes) per week in the range of 30-60 minutes where rate of breathing is notably increased. Heart rate may fall between 130-155 BPM.

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- Working a physical activity job like (e.g. server, mail carrier, house keeper, landscaper, etc.)
- Typically averaging 7,500-10,000 steps per day.

Active

Consider your lifestyle to be Active if your days mostly include activities of daily living (shopping, house cleaning, watering plants, taking out the trash, walking the dog, gardening, and playing with/rocking/feeding your baby), plus:



- 4-6 days of formal exercise or physical activity (e.g. running, weight lifting, circuit training, CrossFit, high-intensity body weight/weight/resistance bands, spin/cycling, or group fitness classes) in the range of 45-90 minutes where rate of breathing is heavy. Heart rate may reach and exceed 155 BPM.



- Days often include additional brisk walks, heavy cleaning, gardening/raking, heavy play, or an active job.
- Spending most of the day doing heavy physical activity (e.g. bike messenger, carpenter)
- Daily step average falls between 8,000 – 12,000 steps per day.

Very Active

Consider your lifestyle to be Active if your days mostly include activities of daily living (shopping, house cleaning, watering plants, taking out the trash, walking the dog, gardening, and playing with/rocking/feeding your baby), plus:



- Formal exercise or physical activity (e.g. running, weight lifting, circuit training, CrossFit, high-intensity body weight/weight/resistance bands, spin/cycling, or group fitness classes) in the range of 45-90 minutes where rate of breathing is heavy. Heart rate may reach and exceed 155 BPM.



- Days often include additional brisk walks, heavy cleaning, gardening/raking, heavy play, or an active job.
- Spending most of the day doing heavy physical activity (e.g. bike messenger, carpenter, construction worker, professional athlete, triathlon competitor with daily training, etc.)
- Daily step average falls between 12,000 – 15,000+ steps per day.

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