

# Office of Health Equity

## Veterans Health Administration

### Department of Veterans Affairs



## MEETING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDELINES AMONG LGB VETERANS

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### INTRODUCTION

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) serves a Veteran population that is increasingly diverse.

Equitable access to high-quality care for all Veterans is a major tenet of the VA healthcare mission. The Office of Health Equity (OHE) champions the elimination of health disparities and achieving health equity for all Veterans, including LGBTQ+ Veterans.

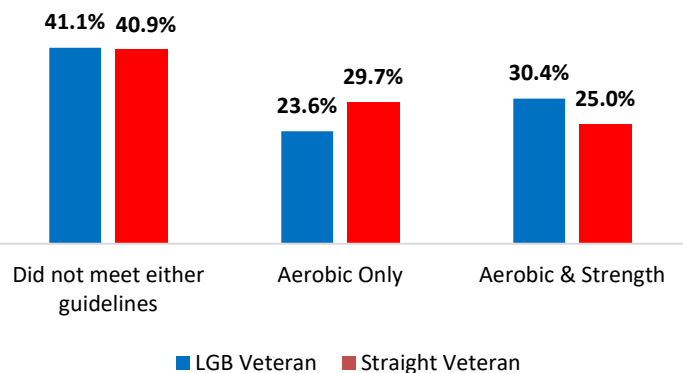
### VETERANS MEETING EXERCISE GUIDELINES

Being physically active can help manage health conditions and can improve quality of life. Adults should aim to do at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity, or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity like walking, biking, or swimming each week and do muscle-strengthening activities that involve all major muscle groups at least 2 days a week.

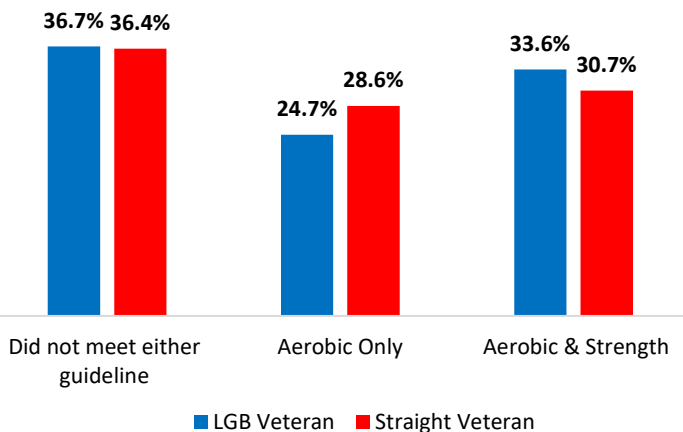
Data from the 2015-2018 National Health Interview Survey was used to identify differences in physical activity among straight and LGB Veterans who identified as male or female.

Male Veterans are more likely to meet one or both physical activity guidelines than female Veterans. The percent of LGB and straight male Veterans not meeting any guidelines were approximately the same (36.7% and 36.4%). The percent of LGB and straight female Veterans not meeting any physical activity guidelines were also similar (41.1% and 40.9%). For both male and female Veterans, straight Veterans were more likely to meet aerobic activity guidelines, but LGB Veterans were more likely to meet both aerobic and strength training guidelines.

### Percent of Female Veterans Meeting Exercise Guidelines



### Percent of Male Veterans Exercise Guidelines



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## PRIORITIZING PHYSICAL HEALTH DISPARITIES

The OHE collaborates with other VA programs to help reduce health disparities by targeting interventions aimed at Veteran groups at higher risk for poor health outcomes, including sexual and gender minority Veterans. Below are options for complementary & traditional modes of physical exercise that Veterans can engage in within their own communities.

## WHOLE HEALTH

Whole Health is VA's cutting-edge approach to care that supports individual Veteran health and well-being.



One of the areas of self-care explored in Whole Health is "[Moving the Body.](#)" VA Medical Centers across the country are implementing complementary and integrative health (CIH) modalities including Tai Chi and Yoga which are two types of CIH that involve mindful movement. Veterans should check with their local VA Medical Center to learn more about what is available near them.

## BE ACTIVE & MOVE!

The MOVE! Weight Management Program for Veterans, VA's weight management, health promotion program, offers Be Active and MOVE! to Veterans who wish to increase their physical activity. This 8-week, group physical activity program is designed to reach Veterans at multiple locations using video telehealth technology. A VA



clinician leads groups in 60-minute physical activity classes, typically broadcasting from a main facility to the more remote Community Based Outpatient Clinics. It's a great way for Veterans to participate in structured, clinician-led, physical activity. Veterans can ask their VA healthcare team about Be Active and MOVE! at their care facility.

## TEAM RED WHITE AND BLUE (RWB)

VA has partnered with Team RWB, a national Veterans Service Organization (VSO). Team RWB connects Veterans to their community through physical and social activity. Team RWB's local programs include in person and virtual running groups, fitness classes, yoga, social gatherings, activity challenges, and volunteer opportunities. Team RWB strives to help Veterans and their families improve their health, increase supportive relationships, and build a strong sense of meaning and purpose. Veterans can visit <https://www.teamrwb.org/> to learn more about how to connect with Team RWB activities in their area.

**For more information about the Office of Health Equity visit:** <https://www.va.gov/healthequity/>

**For more information on Whole Health visit:** <https://www.va.gov/wholehealth/>

**For more information about the MOVE! Program visit:** <https://www.move.va.gov/>

**For more information about Team RWB visit:** <https://www.teamrwb.org/>