

BEING ACTIVE WITH HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

Being active is one of the best things you can do for your health. Regular exercise can help lower your blood pressure. It can also help you lose weight, feel less stressed, and keep your heart healthy. Everyone can find an exercise plan that fits their health status and goals. However, before you start any new exercise program, check with a doctor to make sure it is safe for you to exercise.

What are Physical Activity and Exercise?

Physical Activity is any body movement that uses energy to make your muscles work. Examples of physical activity include yard or housework, playing with children, or other activities that raise heart and breathing rates.

Exercise is a type of physical activity that involves planned, structured, and repeated body movement to maintain or improve physical fitness.

Examples of exercise are:

- Walking briskly
- Jogging
- Yoga
- Dancing
- Tai Chi
- Bicycling
- Swimming

Find an activity that is enjoyable, start slow, and increase your exercise as you are able. Change it up to prevent getting bored with any one activity. And keep in mind that any activity for any length of time is good for you, whether it is considered formal exercise or not.

If you haven't been active lately, start slowly. Your body needs time to get used to being active. Try these tips to get started:

- Start with just 5 – 10 minutes of exercise a day
- Try to do a little more exercise each week until you can do 20 – 30 minutes a day
- You can break up your daily exercise into 3 10-minute blocks of activity a day
- Ramp up the pace and intensity of your workout gradually and spread your exercise throughout the week



How much exercise?

Exercise recommendations for adults with high blood pressure are:

- At least **150 minutes of moderate-intensity** aerobic physical activity each week, or **75 minutes of vigorous-intensity** aerobic exercise each week
- Strength training of all the major muscle groups at least twice a week

Moderate aerobic exercise raises your heart and breathing rate and causes you to sweat lightly after about 10 minutes. You can carry on a conversation, but you cannot sing. Walking briskly, bicycling on level ground or up and down a few hills, water aerobics, and playing doubles tennis are some examples of moderate physical activity.

With vigorous exercise, your breathing is deep and rapid, you sweat after only a few minutes,

and you cannot say more than a few words without needing to pause for several breaths. Vigorous activity feels challenging. Examples include running, swimming laps, playing basketball, or riding a bicycle fast or up multiple hills.

Staying safe when you exercise

Before starting your new exercise program, be sure to talk to your doctor about:

- Your specific exercise goals
- Any blood pressure ranges that would be too high or low for exercising
- What to eat and drink before, during, and after exercise
- Any exercise precautions if you take blood pressure medicines
- When and how to get help if you do not feel well during or after exercise

- Any other tests, referrals, or therapies to add to your current management program

During your exercise program:

- Pay close attention to your body. If you feel dizzy, have chest pain, or just don't feel right, stop what you're doing right away; seek medical attention
- For strength training, use less weight (resistance) and do more repetitions
- Never hold your breath or strain when you exercise
- Stand up slowly from the floor
- Follow any special guidelines if you take blood pressure medicine

