

# Exercise and Activity to Lower Blood Pressure

Staying active is an important way to reduce your blood pressure, improve your health, and feel good.

## Exercise vs. Physical Activity

- Physical activity is anything that gets the body moving.
- Exercise is physical activity that is done hard enough to improve your fitness and health.

## Types of Exercise



**Aerobic** exercises can be done over a long period of time. They use big muscles over and over again (walking, swimming, biking). Aerobic exercises will get your breathing rate up and keep it there.



**Strength** exercises target specific muscles to get them stronger (lifting weights, push ups). Strength exercises can only be repeated for a short period of time before your muscle gets tired.

## Activity Recommendations to Lower Blood Pressure

- **Don't sit too long.** Get up and move at least once an hour.
- **Exercise!**



**At least 150 minutes per week of moderate aerobic activity** (example: walking at a brisk pace 5 days per week for 30 minutes)

**OR At least 75 minutes per week of vigorous aerobic activity** (example: fast hiking or jogging 3 days per week for 25 minutes)



Think about adding strength training 2-3 days per week. Try to exercise the major muscles in the arms, legs, chest, belly, and back.

## Tips to Stay On Track

- **Use an activity tracker** (fitbit, jawbone, garmin) to see how much you are moving.
- **Write your activities into your daily schedule** to make sure other things don't get in the way of your exercise.
- **Know your back up plan** for poor weather or unexpected events.
- **Exercise with a buddy** to keep each other on track and to make it more fun.
- Join a **sports team**.
- **Vary your activities** to keep them interesting and to exercise more muscles.
- **Keep your mind busy when you exercise** with music, TV, or reading.
- Try exercising for shorter periods several times a day to **add up your exercise time**.
- **Get support** from friends and family.
- **Motivate yourself with an event** (Charity walk, 5K run, triathlon).

American Heart Association's guide for exercise to lower blood pressure:

<https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/high-blood-pressure/changes-you-can-make-to-manage-high-blood-pressure/getting-active-to-control-high-blood-pressure>