

Move to Prevent and Control High Blood Pressure: Mission Possible

Easy ways to lower your risk through physical activity

30 minutes of physical activity each day can help

- If your blood pressure is moderately elevated, 30 minutes of brisk walking most days a week may be enough to keep you off medication.
- If you take medication for high blood pressure, 30 minutes of moderate physical activity can make your medication work more effectively and make you feel better.
- If you don't have high blood pressure, being physically active can help keep it that way. If you have normal blood pressure—but are not active—your chances of developing high blood pressure increase, especially as you get older or if you become overweight or obese or develop diabetes.



Getting started

Your physical activity program can be as simple as a 15-minute walk around the block each morning and evening. Gradually build up your program and set new goals to stay motivated. The important thing is to find something you enjoy, and do it

safely. And remember—trying too hard at first can lead to injury and cause you to give up.

If you have a chronic health problem or a family history of heart disease at an early age, be sure to talk with your doctor before launching a new physical activity program.

Tips to easily increase your daily activity

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Park far away from your destination in parking lots so you have farther to walk.
- If you take public transportation, get off a stop early.

Enlist in this vital mission for a healthier you



U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services



5 tips to help you stick with your physical activity program

1. **Set a schedule and keep to it.**
2. **Get a friend or family member to join you.** Motivate each other to keep it up.
3. **Cross-train.** Alternate between different activities so as not to strain one part of the body day after day.
4. **Set goals.**
5. **Reward yourself.** At the end of each month that you stay on your exercise program, reward yourself with something new—new clothes, a compact disc, a new book—something that will help keep you committed. But don't use food as a reward.

Common questions about physical activity

How can I fit physical activity into my busy schedule?

Try breaking up your 30 minutes of activity throughout the day. For instance, take a walk in the morning for 10 minutes, rake leaves for 10 minutes, and take another 10-minute walk after dinner.

I am elderly and have difficulty moving. Should I still try to exercise?

Yes, but be sure you talk to your doctor first to find out which activities are right for you. There are even activities you can do while sitting down.

I just joined a gym. What machines are best?

Stairclimbers and treadmills are excellent, since they simulate walking and climbing which can help burn fat, build endurance, and strengthen the cardiovascular system. Weightlifting also provides a great workout.

How can I prevent injuries?

Gradually build up the intensity and duration of your physical activity program over many weeks or months to avoid overdoing it. And always stretch before and afterwards.

Activities for moderate exercise



- **Brisk walking** (3-4 miles per hour)
- **Home care and general cleaning**
- **Home repair, such as painting**
- **Mowing the lawn** (with power mower)
- **Gardening**
- **Dancing**
- **Racket sports, such as table tennis**
- **Golf** (walking the course)
- **Fishing** (standing and casting, walking, or wading)
- **Swimming** (with moderate effort)
- **Cycling** (at a moderate speed of 10 miles per hour or less)
- **Canoeing or rowing** (at a speed of about 2-3.9 miles per hour)

Resources to help you stay healthy



Your Guide to Lowering High Blood Pressure

http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/hbp/prevent/p_active/p_active.htm

NIH Senior Health offers more tips about physical activity, as well as video examples of specific activities that are important for seniors.

<http://www.nihseniorhealth.gov/exercise/toc.html>

Staying active can help save your life.



National High Blood Pressure
Education Program

