

Exercise and Fitness for Cardiovascular Health

Maintaining your fitness and engaging in a regular fitness program is a significant benefit to your health.

Some benefits of regular exercise include:

- Reduced risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and some forms of cancer
- Weight management
- Better sleep
- Lower incidence of stress and depression
- Fewer back problems
- Higher levels of energy
- Less chance of injury

Exercise and fitness need to be a lifetime commitment so you can retain the benefits you gain. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity per week OR at least 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity per week.

Moderate-intensity activity raises your heart rate, but you are still able to carry on a conversation while exercising. Examples of moderate-intensity exercise include dancing, gardening and brisk walking.

Vigorous-intensity activity raises your heart rate enough that it is difficult to carry on a conversation while exercising. Examples of some vigorous-intensity exercise include running, swimming laps and hiking uphill.

Activity should be spread throughout the week and not done all at once on a single day. Twice a week, add weight training to your exercise routine.

Before beginning any exercise program, talk with your physician, particularly if you answer yes to any of the following questions:

- Have you been diagnosed with any kind of cardiac issues?

- Do you ever experience chest pain?
- Do you have dizzy spells or often feel faint?
- Have you been diagnosed with high blood pressure?
- Are you taking medication for issues such as diabetes or asthma?

Weight loss and exercise

Being more active and building more muscle can help you lose and keep off excess weight. Being active burns calories – almost twice as many for walking slowly instead of sitting – and helps you keep muscle as you age. Muscle burns more calories than fat, so when you add muscle you'll burn more calories even when you're not being active. However, exercise needs to be just one part of a weight-loss and healthy living plan.

