

Move More

Making Physical Activity Routine



Heart disease is a leading cause of death in the United States. The good news is that you can lower your risk of getting it or having a stroke by simply moving more. Many types of activity can help your heart—going on a hike or taking the stairs, biking to the store or around the block, wheeling yourself in your wheelchair. Figure out what works best for you.

How much is enough?

As little as 60 minutes a week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity such as walking briskly helps your heart. For major health benefits, aim for at least 150 minutes (2½ hours) a week. Or go for 75 minutes a week of more vigorous activity such as playing basketball, running, or jumping rope, which gives the same benefits. The bottom line: More activity means a bigger boost to your health.

It's up to you how you reach your own personal targets. For example, 30 minutes of physical activity, five times a week, is one option if you're aiming for 150 minutes a week.

Can't carve out a lot of time in your day? Don't **chuck** your goal, **chunk** it! Try 10 minutes a few times a day, for example.



Only have 10 minutes? Consider:

- ✓ Walking briskly for 5 minutes, turning around and walking back
- ✓ Dancing (standing or seated) to three songs
- ✓ Getting off your bus early and walking the last stretch

You'll know you're moving enough to help your heart if

- ✓ Your heart is beating faster
- ✓ You're breathing harder
- ✓ You break a sweat



Or, try the talk test:

- ✓ During physical activities, like brisk walking, you should be able to talk, but not sing.
- ✓ During activities such as jogging, you can't say more than a few words without pausing for a breath.

Why move more?

Being active can:

- Protect your heart (even if you have heart disease)
- Improve blood flow
- Lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels
- Give you more stamina and ability to cope with stress

If you're inactive, you're nearly twice as likely to develop heart disease than if you're active. Learn more about the benefits of physical activity on the [NHLBI website](#).

Get strong

In addition to aerobic activity, take time to strengthen your muscles. Try to work your leg, hip, back, chest, abdomen, shoulder, and arm muscles. Aim to do muscle strengthening twice a week in addition to your aerobic activities.

All adults should avoid inactivity. Start gradually and increase slowly.

Learn more about:

- [CDC Target Heart Rate and Estimated Maximum Heart Rate.](#)
- [Different types of physical activity.](#)
- [Recommendations for children, older people, and pregnant women.](#)



Get motivated

Try these tips to make being active part of your everyday routine:

Add a friend or family member

- Take a yoga or other fitness class online with a friend.
- Share your fitness goals with your spouse or roommate.
- Commit to a walking schedule with a friend or family member, even if you can't walk together.

Do what you love

- If you enjoy the outdoors, try biking, hiking, golf, or gardening.
- Play with the children in your life.
- Check out the track at a nearby school.
- Think of physical activity as a special time to refresh your body and mind.

Build activities into your day

- Do strength exercises while watching TV.
- Use a workout game on your gaming console.
- Take a walk during lunch.
- Go for a walk or a bike ride before you sit down to enjoy dinner or a movie.

When To Check With Your Doctor

Certain physical activities are safe for most people. If you have a chronic health condition such as heart disease, arthritis, diabetes, or other symptoms, talk with your doctor first.

Learn more about the risks of physical activity for certain groups on the [NHLBI website](#).

