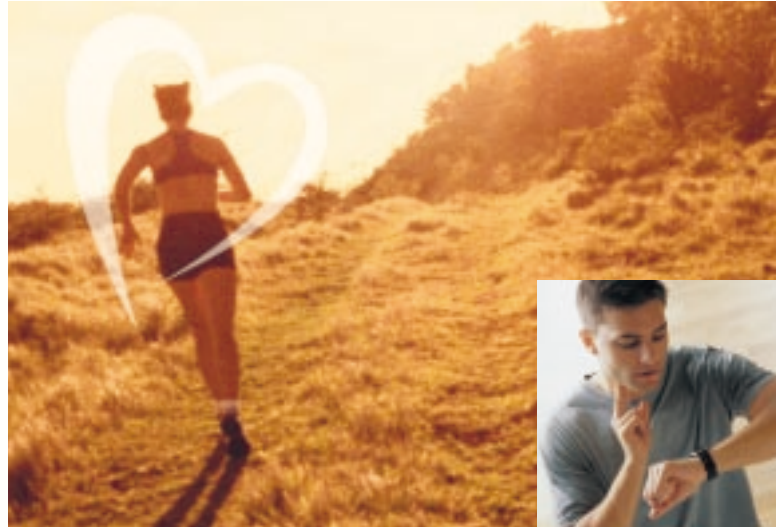


# BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



Where caring makes the connection.<sup>SM</sup>



*Contact your local Ministry Health Care facility for more information.*



Where caring makes the connection.<sup>SM</sup>

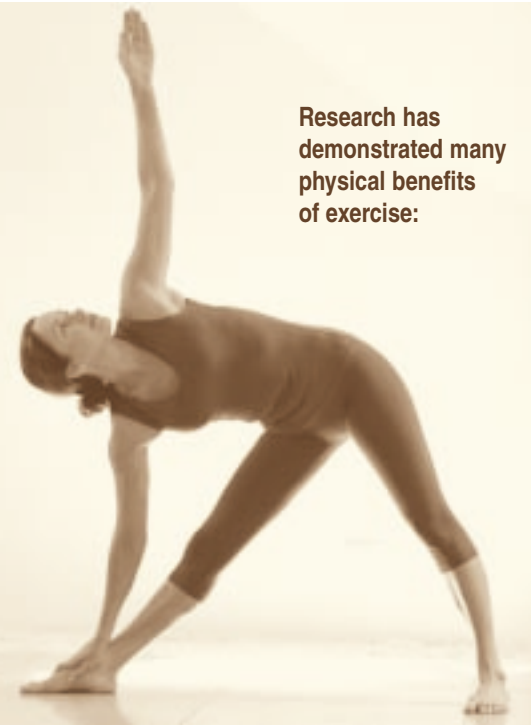
[www.ministryhealth.org](http://www.ministryhealth.org)



# BENEFITS OF EXERCISE

## Why Get Active?

Because it's the healthy thing to do! People who don't get enough active activity are more likely to develop heart disease. Daily activity is like medicine for your heart, helping it beat stronger and more efficiently.



Research has demonstrated many physical benefits of exercise:

- Increases physical stamina
- Improves blood circulation
- Helps your body use oxygen more efficiently
- Improves blood pressure
- Decreases weight and body fat
- Increases HDL (good) cholesterol levels

- Lowers LDL (bad) cholesterol and triglycerides
- Strengthens bones and slows osteoporosis (bone loss)
- Strengthens muscles
- Improves look and appearance
- Slows down the aging process
- Promotes better sleep
- Lowers blood sugar levels for diabetics
- Increases self-esteem
- Decreases depression and anxiety
- Increases feelings of independence
- Improves mental well-being
- Improves ability to cope with stress, tension and depression

## New to Exercise? Talk to Your Doctor First.

If you've been a "couch potato," have medical problems, or are middle-aged or older, it's important to check with your doctor before starting a rigorous exercise program.

Your doctor can help you design a program that fits your lifestyle and medical conditions. If you're at high risk for heart disease, your doctor may first prescribe an exercise test to find any potential problems.

**Once you've seen your doctor, you can expect to start a program of regular physical activity that:**

- Works with your lifestyle;
- Is fun;
- Involves continuous motion of large muscles; like your arms and legs; and
- Builds endurance.

## Recommendations to Remember

The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) recently released new exercise guidelines, which state that:

- Cardiovascular benefits gained in three 10-minute exercise bouts are almost the same as those from one 30-minute exercise session.
- To realize exercise benefits, inactive people should perform aerobic endurance more than 2 times per week at more than 40-50% of their aerobic capacity for 10 minutes or longer.

## Types of Exercise

ACSM has recommendations for each type of exercise: aerobic activity, resistance training and flexibility.

### Aerobic Activity

Any type of activity that's good for your heart is considered aerobic exercise. Aerobic refers to the rhythmical and repetitive use of large muscle groups for a continuous period of time. Suggested activities include brisk walking, biking, swimming, and dancing.

- To benefit most from exercise, choose an activity you will enjoy, and try to do at least 30 minutes of it most days of the week.



# MONITORING YOUR ACTIVITY

- Exercise 3-5 times per week at 45 to 85% of your aerobic capacity (unfit individuals should aim for the lower intensity level).
- Exercise should be done for 20-60 minutes a day; 10-minute sessions can be accumulated instead of doing one session.

## Resistance Training

Research shows that resistance training (lifting weights) over time reduces heart rate and blood pressure when lifting any given load.

This means you can even benefit from a one-set regimen! In fact, one set of 8-15 repetitions provides nearly the same strength and endurance increases as three sets. Multiple sets produce only slightly greater benefits.

- People age 50 or younger should work major muscle groups 2-3 days a week with weight loads that allow 8-12 reps.
- Those over age 50 should perform weight loads that allow 10-15 reps.

## Flexibility Training

Flexibility training involves stretching all of the body's major muscle groups through a moving or static range-of-motion. Yoga is an example of flexibility training.

**Stretch four repetitions per muscle group, 2-3 days per week.**

Overall, you can keep your heart healthy by increasing your:

- **Stamina through aerobic activity;**
- **Muscle strength through resistance training or weightlifting; and**
- **Flexibility through stretching.**



Remember that if you can't fit a large block of time in (i.e., 30 minutes) for activity each day, exercise three times for 10 minutes each session.

## Monitor Your Progress

It's important to monitor your exercise. Exercising at too low an intensity will have little benefit to your heart; yet too high an intensity could cause bodily discomfort or harm. Ways to monitor your intensity and prevent injury or harm include:

- **Monitoring your pulse;**
- **Knowing your target heart rate; and**
- **Using the Rating of Perceived Exertion scale.**

### Pulse

As your heart beats, arteries expand and contract. This expansion and contraction, which can be felt in your wrist or neck, is your pulse. Your pulse rate is the number of beats felt in one minute. Your pulse rate and heart rate are the same number.

Your pulse indicates how hard your heart is working. Your heart beats slower at rest and faster during activity. It's important to know what your normal resting pulse rate is. A normal pulse ranges from 50 to 100 beats per minute. A resting pulse that's much faster or slower than normal could indicate that something is wrong.

### How to Take Your Pulse

- 1 Sit down and rest 5 minutes before taking your pulse.
- 2 Put your first two fingers over the wrist of your opposite hand. Your fingers should be flat and pressed lightly into the thumb side of the wrist.
- 3 Take time to feel a good pulsation or throbbing.
- 4 Watch a clock or use a wristwatch to time yourself. Count the number of beats you feel for 10 seconds. Then multiply that number by 6.
- 5 That number is your pulse rate per minute.
- 6 Write down your pulse rate. If it's much faster or slower than usual (below 50 or above 100), note if it's irregular and notify your doctor of the changes. If your pulse has changed and you are feeling light-headed, dizzy or faint, have someone drive you to the emergency department of your local hospital.





# MONITORING YOUR ACTIVITY

## Taking Your Pulse with Exercise

Taking your pulse is a good way to determine how hard your body is working during exercise. When exercising, take your pulse for 6 seconds and multiply by 10. The chart below will help you calculate your pulse rate. For the first month after a cardiac event, your heart rate should not go more than 20 or 30 beats per minute above your resting or starting heart rate.

a x b = c (one minute pulse rate)				
(a) Pulse for 10 seconds		(b) Multiply by 6	=	(c) Pulse for 1 minute
9	x	6	=	54
10	x	6	=	60
11	x	6	=	66
12	x	6	=	72
13	x	6	=	78
14	x	6	=	81
15	x	6	=	90
16	x	6	=	96
17	x	6	=	102
18	x	6	=	108
19	x	6	=	114
20	x	6	=	120

## Target Heart Rate

Your target heart rate is the benchmark for your ideal intensity level during exercise. Your doctor or other health care professional can help you determine this rate. A target heart rate is based on your resting heart rate, age and medical condition.

A stress test is sometimes done to help determine an accurate target heart rate.

Calculate Your Target Heart Rate

**220 – YOUR AGE X 0.6**

## Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE) Scale

The Rating of Perceived Exertion scale was designed to help you “listen” to your body while exercising. The numbers on the scale increase with the level of activities as shown in the chart.

During your exercise sessions, you will be asked, “How hard do you feel you’re working?” The staff will match the corresponding number to your response. This tool is especially helpful if you’re taking medications that keep your heart rate low.

## Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE)

6
7 <i>Very, very light</i>
8
9 <i>Very light</i>
10
11 <i>Fairly light</i>
12
13 <i>Somewhat hard</i>
14
15 <i>Hard</i>
16
17 <i>Very hard</i>
18
19 <i>Very, very hard</i>
20

## Smart Ways to Exercise

To feel your best and get the most out of your exercise routine, here are some things to keep in mind:

### DRESS APPROPRIATELY:

Consider the weather if exercising outside; dress in layers that you can remove if you get too warm. Wear loose-fitting clothing and comfortable shoes.

### AVOID TEMPERATURE

EXTREMES: Don’t exercise in very hot or cold weather.

For example, walking in a shopping mall or other indoor facility can be a good alternative to walking outside.

### WAIT AFTER EATING:

Waiting 1 hour after a meal allows your food to digest before you add exercise to the heart’s workload.

### WARM UP AND COOL DOWN:

Each time you exercise, include a warm-up and cool-down period.

Warm up with stretching and/or 5 minutes of slow walking.

Cool down with 5 minutes of slow walking and/or stretching.

### WALK CONTINUOUSLY AND RHYTHMICALLY:

If you walk, do so at a comfortable, brisk pace without stopping unless necessary. Sustained moderate exercise for 20–40 minutes is more beneficial and safer than a short bout of intense exercise.

**AVOID ALCOHOL AND CAFFEINE:** Avoid alcohol and caffeine prior to exercise; they will make you dehydrated.

## Customizing Your Routine

### Exercise Prescription

An exercise prescription is an individualized exercise plan to promote cardiovascular strengthening. It includes the type of exercise, as well as frequency, duration and intensity. When developing a personalized plan, your individual health status, needs and capabilities are all taken into consideration.



# TYPES OF EXERCISE

Feel free to discuss any concerns you may have about exercise with your physician or another health care professional. To contact an expert at Ministry Health Care, call your local Ministry Health Care facility or log on to [www.ministryhealth.org](http://www.ministryhealth.org).

## Exercise Components

### TYPE

Choose an aerobic exercise or a combination of exercises that you enjoy and can perform consistently throughout the year.

### DURATION

Exercise a minimum of 30 minutes (in 1 time block, or 2 blocks of 15 minutes).

### FREQUENCY

Work out most days of the week (4 to 5 times).

### INTENSITY

Fairly light to somewhat hard on the RPE scale is usually appropriate. You may also be given a target heart rate that should not be exceeded during exercise.

Follow the individualized exercise instructions your physician or other health care professional gives you.



## Exercises

You should exercise to keep active—not to overstress your body. Do not do exercises that cause pain. If you have prior limitations, such as arthritis or rotator cuff injury, skip a particular exercise or modify the activity.

### Warm-Up Exercises

Do these easy exercises to warm up your body and prepare you for more activity:

#### SLOW DEEP BREATH

Breathe in through your nose and blow out your mouth. Repeat 3 times.

#### SHOULDER CIRCLES

Move your shoulder in a circle forward, then backward. Repeat 3 times.

#### ANKLE CIRCLES

Lift both feet off the floor. Circle ankle to the left. Then change direction and circle to the right. Rotate 3 to 5 times.

#### ANKLE LIFT AND POINT

Lift both feet off the floor. Point your toes up. Hold for 5 seconds. Point your toes down. Hold for 5 seconds. Repeat 3 times.

#### ALTERNATING SHOULDER TOUCHES

With arms extended out at your side, touch your left hand to the opposite shoulder. Then touch your right hand to the opposite shoulder. Repeat.



#### ARM EXTENSIONS

Starting with your arms at your side, touch your hands to your shoulders. Extend arms in front. Return your hands and arms down to your side. Repeat.

#### ARM LIFTS

Starting with your arms at your side, touch your hands to your shoulders. Lift your arms over head; touch hands to your shoulders; return your arms to your side. Repeat.



#### KNEE LIFTS

With both feet flat on floor, lift right knee. Rest foot back on floor; lift left knee. Rest foot back on floor. Repeat.

#### LEG LIFTS

With both feet flat on floor, lift right leg. Rest foot back on floor; lift left leg. Rest foot back on floor. Repeat.

Repeat warm-up exercises until you're relaxed.

## Your "Get Active" Checklist

- Discuss your program with your physician.
- Find several aerobic activities you like.
- Include family and friends in your activities.
- Purchase the appropriate exercise equipment (walking shoes, bike helmet, etc.).
- Find a few strength and flexibility activities you like.
- Schedule time for activities on your calendar.

