

Physical Activity and Blood Pressure

For overall health benefits to the heart, lungs and circulation, perform any moderate- to vigorous-intensity aerobic activity using the following guidelines:

- For most healthy people, get the equivalent of at least 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) per week of moderate-intensity physical activity, such as brisk walking.
- *If you need to lower your blood pressure or cholesterol, aim for 40 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity 3 to 4 times per week.*
- You can incorporate your weekly physical activity with 30 minutes a day on at least 5 days a week.
- Physical activity should be performed in episodes of at least 10 minutes, and preferably, it should be spread throughout the week.
- Include flexibility and stretching exercises.
- Include muscle strengthening activity at least 2 days each week.

The Benefits of Walking/Exercise

There are countless physical activities out there, but walking has the lowest dropout rate of them all! Research has shown that the benefits of walking and moderate physical activity for at least 30 minutes a day can help you:

- Reduce the risk of coronary heart disease
- Improve blood pressure and blood sugar levels
- Improve blood lipid profile
- Maintain body weight and lower the risk of obesity
- Enhance mental well being
- Reduce the risk of osteoporosis
- Reduce the risk of breast and colon cancer
- Reduce the risk of non-insulin dependent (type 2) diabetes

Workplace Wellness

A recent study shows that sitting from 6 to 8 hours a day could have a negative impact on your health even if you are someone who regularly exercises. This challenge will help you look for simple ways to break up your day with physical activity, while making sure you consume water throughout your workday.

It is recommended that you take a walk for at least 5 minutes in the morning and 5 minutes in the afternoon and drink at least an 8 oz. of water.

Source: AHA “It’s All About Me” Wellness Program

If my blood pressure stays around 85/55, do I have a health problem?

As long as you are not experiencing symptoms of low blood pressure, there is no need for concern. Most doctors consider chronically low blood pressure dangerous only if it causes noticeable signs and symptoms, such as:

- **Dizziness or lightheadedness**
- **Fainting (called [syncope](#))**
- **Dehydration and unusual thirst**

Dehydration can sometimes cause blood pressure to drop. However, dehydration does not automatically

signal low blood pressure. Fever, vomiting, severe diarrhea, overuse of diuretics and strenuous exercise can all lead to dehydration, a potentially serious condition in which your body loses more water than you take in. Even mild dehydration (**a loss of as little as 1 percent to 2 percent of body weight**), can cause weakness, dizziness and fatigue.

- **Lack of concentration**
- **Blurred vision**
- **Nausea**
- **Cold, clammy, pale skin**
- **Rapid, shallow breathing**
- **Fatigue**
- **Depression**

As long as no symptoms are present, low blood pressure is not a problem. However, if your blood pressure is normally higher or if you are experiencing any of the symptoms listed above, your low pressure may have an underlying cause.

What is the AHA recommendation for healthy blood pressure?

This chart reflects blood pressure categories defined by the American Heart Association.

| Blood Pressure Category | Systolic mm Hg (upper #) | Diastolic mm Hg (lower #) | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Normal | less than 120 | and | less than 80 |
| Prehypertension | 120 – 139 | or | 80 – 89 |
| High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 1 | 140 – 159 | or | 90 – 99 |
| High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 2 | 160 or higher | or | 100 or higher |
| <u>Hypertensive Crisis</u> (Emergency care needed) | Higher than 180 | or | Higher than 110 |

* Your doctor should evaluate unusually [low blood pressure](#) readings.

Information Source: The American Heart / Stroke Association

Important note: Make sure you consult your Health Care Provider before you engage in exercise.