



Get Moving this February to Give Your Heart the Love it Needs

February is Heart Health Month, so there's no better time to give your heart the love it needs. Getting more active is one of the best ways you can help ensure your heart stays strong and healthy.

Even small amounts of regular physical activity can have a great impact on your heart health. Here are a few ways staying active can help your heart:

- **Improves circulation.** Physical activity gets your blood flowing. Good circulation makes sure that the oxygen and nutrients you need make their way to every part of your body. A healthy blood flow is also a key factor in removing waste products from your body. This can lower the risk of heart disease and stroke.
- **Keeps blood pressure in check.** Staying active can help keep high blood pressure under control. When you're active, your blood vessels maintain flexibility and promote good blood flow. Keeping your blood pressure in check greatly reduces strain on your heart and arteries, lowering the risk of heart disease.
- **Manages weight.** Keeping your weight at a healthy level is important for heart health. Too much body weight can put a lot more strain on your heart. One of the best ways to maintain a healthy weight is with regular exercise.
- **Controls cholesterol levels.** Regular exercise helps keep your cholesterol at healthy levels. It can lower your LDL levels (the bad stuff) and boost your HDL cholesterol (the good stuff)!

Keeping these levels balanced can help prevent the build-up of plaque in your arteries. Plaque can stiffen the arteries and increase the chance of heart attack and stroke.

- **Strengthens your heart muscle.** Like other muscles, your heart gets stronger with regular exercise. Activities like walking, running, swimming, and cycling strengthen your heart, improving its efficiency and lowering the risk of heart disease.
- **Manages stress.** Unchecked stress can raise your blood pressure and even trigger a heart attack. Some people may cope with stress by eating, drinking, or smoking. But that may compound the issue. One of the best ways to manage stress is with regular physical activity.

How much exercise do you need?

While any movement throughout the day is good, starting an active exercise routine is even better. The American Heart Association recommends aiming for at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity exercise. If possible, try to find time for some type of strength training 2 days a week as well.

Staying active and fit will help you achieve a healthier, longer, and more vibrant life.

If you've been inactive for some time or if you have any medical conditions, be sure to talk with your doctor before starting an exercise routine.

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References

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*Add a spouse/domestic partner to a primary membership for additional monthly fees. Spouses/domestic partners must be 18 years or older. Fees will vary based on fitness center selection.

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