



# The best exercises to keep your heart healthy

**Before you start any new exercise routine, talk to your doctor to make sure it's safe.**

Regular physical activity can help you feel better and stay healthier.  
Every bit counts—even light exercise can help make your heart stronger.

## **Getting regular exercise helps:<sup>1</sup>**

- Improve sleep, memory and attention
- Boost your mood and sense of well-being
- Strengthen muscles and bones
- Reduce risks of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and some cancers
- Manage blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol
- Strengthen your lungs and cardiovascular system
- Increase energy and decrease stress levels
- Improve balance and stamina

**Feel better  
and stay healthier  
with regular  
physical activity**

Keep in mind, everyone is different. Not every activity is right for everyone. But there's an easy way to figure out which exercises are the best fit for your fitness level.



## Ask yourself:

**How do I feel when I do regular physical activity, like walking up a flight of stairs or walking the dog around the block?**

Your answer to that simple question will help you and your doctor determine what limits you have (if any) and which activities might be safe for you. Before starting any exercise program, always talk with your doctor. If you feel unusual, dizzy, become short of breath or have chest pain while doing any of these activities, stop immediately and seek appropriate medical attention.



**I don't feel tired or have any shortness of breath. My heart doesn't beat too fast or too hard.**

### **Your doctor may recommend:**

- Jogging or running
- Walking briskly or hiking
- Bicycling
- Circuit weight training
- Dancing or step aerobics
- Swimming or water aerobics
- Calisthenics—pushups, pullups, etc.
- Tennis or pickleball
- Skiing
- Kayaking
- Gardening



**I feel a little run-down, and I have some trouble breathing. My heartbeat speeds up.**

### **Your doctor may recommend:**

- Walking briskly
- Cleaning the house
- Washing the car
- Gentle yoga
- Golf
- Tennis (doubles)
- Water aerobics
- Dancing (ballroom)
- Table tennis
- Fishing from riverbank
- Badminton



**I feel OK when resting, but even light physical activity makes it harder to breathe. I get tired, and I notice my heart beats faster and harder.**

### **Your doctor may recommend:**

- Walking slowly (around your home, the office or a store)
- Light housework, like making the bed, washing dishes, ironing or cooking
- Darts
- Croquet
- Fishing
- Playing most musical instruments



**I feel short of breath and tired sitting in a chair. When I'm resting, my heart beats fast, and I have chest pain. Doing anything makes it worse.**

### **Your doctor may recommend:**

- Arts and crafts
- Playing cards
- Chair exercises
- Walking
- Stretching