

## Cardiovascular (CV) exercise:

A sedentary lifestyle (lack of regular CV exercise) is one of the 5 major risk factors (along with high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, and obesity) for cardiovascular disease (CVD), as outlined by the American Heart Association. Evidence from many scientific studies show that reducing these risk factors decreases the chance of having a heart attack or experiencing another cardiac event, such as a stroke.

In addition to reducing CVD, exercise has many other beneficial effects on the body, including weight reduction, improvement of blood pressure and cholesterol levels, stress reduction, reduction of certain cancers and even improvement of chronic neck or back pain.

Exercise can reduce the “bad” cholesterol levels in the blood (the low-density lipoprotein [LDL] level), as well as total cholesterol, and can raise the “good” cholesterol (the high-density lipoprotein level [HDL]). In diabetic patients, regular activity favorably affects the body’s ability to control their blood sugar.

The American Heart Association recommends at least 150 minutes per week of moderate exercise or 75 minutes per week of vigorous exercise (or a combination of moderate and vigorous activity). Moderate activity is defined as any activity that is similar in intensity to brisk walking at a rate of about 3 to 4 miles per hour. These activities can include any other form of occupational or recreational activity that is dynamic in nature and of similar intensity, such as cycling, yard work, and swimming. 30 minutes a day, five times a week is an easy goal to remember, however you will also experience benefits even if you divide your time into two or three segments of 10 -15 minutes per day.

The best type of CV exercise is whatever activity you'll do on a regular basis that gets your heart rate up to it's target value and keeps it there for more than at least 30 minutes. (Target heart rate is roughly calculated as 220 minus your age, then multiplied by 75%)

The simplest type of CV exercise is a regular walking program. It's enjoyable, free, easy, social and great exercise. A walking program is flexible and boasts high success rates because people can stick with it. It's easy for walking to become a regular and satisfying part of life.

CV exercise; such a simple way to improve so many aspects of your health. Speak with your doctor if you have any specific questions on how to start this very important medical prescription!