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Aerobic Exercise for a Healthy Heart

Exercise is a lot more than an energy booster and a stress reliever. It also strengthens your heart muscle, lowers your blood pressure and cholesterol, and burns calories. It can also improve your resting muscle tone, and your mood.

Choose an aerobic activity

Choose an activity that makes your heart and lungs work harder than they do when you rest or walk normally. This aerobic exercise can improve the way your heart and other muscles use oxygen. Make it fun by exercising with a friend and choosing an activity you enjoy. Here are some ideas:

- Walking
- Swimming
- Bicycling
- Stair climbing
- Dancing
- Jogging
- Gardening

Exercise regularly

If you haven't been exercising regularly, get your doctor's OK first. Then start slowly. Here are some tips:

- Begin exercising 3 times a week for 5 to 10 minutes at a time.
- When you feel comfortable, add a few minutes each session.
- Slowly build up to exercising 3 to 4 times each week. Each session should last for 40 minutes, on average, and involve moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity.
- Your goal should be at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity at least 5 days per week for a total of 150 or at least 25 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity at least 3 days per week for a total of 75 minutes
- If you have been given nitroglycerin, be sure to carry it when you exercise.
- If you get chest pain (angina) when you're exercising, stop what you're doing, take your nitroglycerin, and call your doctor.

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