

Health Promotion Series-Physical Activity

Vol. 5

Kerrie Walker, PT

High Blood Pressure

Physical activity is beneficial in not only helping to control your blood pressure, but also has other added benefits such as managing your weight, strengthening your heart, and managing your stress level. All of these added benefits are also good for your blood pressure. Your risk of heart attack and stroke are increased with lack of physical activity.



The American Heart Association has the following recommendations for overall health benefits, including helping lower your blood pressure:

- Most healthy people: at least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity physical activity, can be done as 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week
- To lower your blood pressure or cholesterol: 40 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity 3-4 times per week
- Preferably your physical activity should be spread throughout the week and done for at least 10 minutes at a time
- Include stretching and flexibility
- Include strengthening at least 2 days each week

Calculate Target Heart Rate

Maximal Heart Rate (mhr) Formula:
220 - age X % intensity

Example: 45 year old

60% intensity -
175 mhr (220 - age)
X .60 (percent intensity)
105 (target heart rate)

80% intensity -
175 mhr (220 - age)
X .80 (percent intensity)
140 (target heart rate)

Calculating your maximum heart rate is one way to determine your exercise intensity. Use the formula of 220 and subtract your age. Your target heart rate is your maximum heart rate multiplied by the percentage of effort that you want to complete (please see your handout for further information on this). Your percentage is based on your goals for exercise and can be found in the below link.

If calculating your heart rate and keeping up with it while exercising seems to be too much, then try using a “conversational pace” which equates to moderate intensity exercise.

http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HighBloodPressure/PreventionTreatmentofHighBloodPressure/Physical-Activity-and-Blood-Pressure_UCM_301882_Article.jsp#.Vkc2UHuJ1-I