

---

## Exercise Basics for Anyone

### Do I Need A Physical Exam Before I Exercise?

Yes. If you have had a heart problem, make it a point to undergo a medical exam before you start an exercise program.

### What Are The Benefits Of Exercise?

Exercise can reduce your risk of future cardiac complications. Walking, biking, swimming and other cardiovascular exercise can help you to control obesity and high blood pressure. Activity also decreases fats circulating in your blood stream. It can also make you feel great.

### Are There Risks To Exercising?

Yes, especially if you've had heart trouble. However, research shows that exercise helps improve the outlook and quality of life even for people with severe heart disease. To minimize any risks, follow the guidelines your doctor gives you. This will allow you to reap the many health benefits of exercise while reducing the risks.

### How Long Should I Exercise?

To lower your risk of heart disease, exercise at least 30 minutes per day, at least three days a week. If you haven't exercised much lately, try starting by exercising on alternate days. This helps to reduce the risk of injury. Be kind to your body. Don't go out on the first day and start with a 30-minute run. Instead, start with five minutes of walking. Then, add one minute every day until you reach your 30-minute-per-day goal.

### How Vigorously Should I Exercise?

In general, you should be able to carry on a conversation while you are exercising. If you're a swimmer, you should be able to say a few words to the swimmer in the next lane after each lap.

### What Is My Maximum Heart Rate?

Maximum heart rate is the highest number of times your heart can beat in one minute. It's a useful tool to determine the intensity of your training. A simple way to figure out your maximum heart rate is to subtract your age from 220.

### What Is My Target Heart Rate?

A target heart rate is the range you want to keep your heart rate within when you exercise. To get the full benefit of exercise, you should keep your heart rate within 50 percent to 75 percent of your maximum heart rate.

If you're 50 years old, your maximum heart rate should be around 170 beats per minute. Here's the math:

- To find 50 percent of 170, multiply 0.5 by 170. The answer is 85.
- To find 75 percent of 170, multiply 0.75 by 170. The answer is 127.

Your target heart rate while exercising should be between 85 and 127 beats per minute.

If you're having heart difficulties, always consult your doctor before starting an exercise program. Your doctor can help you determine your precise target heart rate.

### Why Should I Warm Up?

A good warm-up increases the temperature of your muscles and stretches tendons and ligaments, making them more flexible and less likely to suffer an injury. It also helps you have a much more productive workout.

### How Do I Warm Up?

Many warm-up activities are simply low-intensity versions of your chosen sport. For example, if running is your exercise, an effective warm-up would be to start out walking and gradually increase your speed until you are jogging. A great warm up for any workout or for any sport you play is a stationary bicycle.

### What is my BMI?

Many people refer to this when trying to determine how overweight someone is. The body mass index (BMI) is, in fact, a useful measure of weight to height. It gives you an indication of whether you are at risk of health problems (such as diabetes and heart disease) that are related to being overweight or obese. An ideal BMI is probably between 20.5 and 21.5. A BMI greater than 30 is associated with increased risk of health problems related to obesity. If you are concerned about your BMI, talk with your doctor. (need link to bmi calculator)