

BETTER HEALTH 4 YOU

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BP, CHOLESTEROL & HEART

The Real Secret to a Healthy Heart

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Don't spend as much time exercising as you should? Maybe it's time to get to the heart of the matter. Regular exercise not only burns calories and shapes muscles but also protects your heart. How? Like other muscles, your heart becomes stronger with regular physical activity. As your cardiovascular fitness improves, your heart muscle doesn't have to work as forcefully to pump oxygen-rich blood through your body.

Promoting efficient blood flow is just one-way exercise helps your heart. You probably know that regular exercise at a moderate or vigorous intensity lowers the risk of heart disease and

heart attack. And having a strong heart helps you cope with other stresses in life, whether physical or emotional.



One of the best workouts for your heart

Any form of aerobic exercise, such as walking, running, biking or swimming, can improve your cardiovascular fitness. Interval training — alternating short bursts of high-intensity activity with less intense activity — is especially effective. Here's why:

- Interval training challenges your heart by putting it into the maximal heart rate zone for short bursts of time. The maximum heart rate is the upper limit of what

HEART HEALTHY

Creamy Tomato Fettuccini

8 oz whole wheat fettuccine
2 clove garlic
1 small onion, chopped
2/3 cup fat-free ricotta
1 tsp. basil
1 tsp. sugar
1/8 tsp pepper
1 oz. can diced tomatoes

Cook pasta according to pkg. Spay saucepan and cook onion and garlic until crisp-tender. Stir in remaining ingredients. Heat to a boil. Reduce and simmer uncovered 8 min. Add pasta and toss.

Nutrition Information Per serving: 266 calories, 1g fat, 7mg chol, 54g carbs, 13g protein, 61mg sodium. 8g fiber **SERVINGS: 4**



your cardiovascular system can handle during physical activity — an intensity that feels like you're working very hard.

- Between the high-intensity intervals, your heart rate comes back down into a lower heart rate zone, allowing for heart rate recovery.
- Getting your heart rate back up after a short rest challenges your heart muscle in a way that makes it operate more efficiently.

How does interval training work? Here's a sample 40-minute exercise session that includes interval training:

1. Walk slowly to warm up. Gradually increase to a moderate pace for five minutes.
2. Increase your speed so that you're walking briskly.
3. After five minutes of brisk walking, increase your speed so that you are jogging for 30 seconds to two minutes.
4. Slow down to walking a moderate pace for one to three minutes.
5. Repeat steps 2, 3 and 4.
6. After 35 minutes, walk at a slower pace for five minutes to cool down.

If you have a chronic health condition or haven't been exercising regularly, consult your doctor before trying interval training. The American College of Sports Medicine recommends that people have established a base level of fitness — exercising three to five times a week for 20 to 60 minutes — before beginning interval training.

Resistance training, also called strength training, has benefits for your heart, too. Long-term resistance training can help lower blood pressure. Resistance training also increases muscle mass. This makes it easier for your body to burn calories and maintain a healthy weight, which helps keep your heart healthy.



One part of an equation

While exercise is a key part of maintaining good heart health, be careful not to undermine your hours at the gym by letting other areas of self-care slide. For instance, constant worrying about things you have no control over can stress your heart. Make sure you're getting enough sleep, eating nutritious food and making time for relaxation.

Experiments

Try these heart-healthy experiments.

1. Try interval training. Find the method you like best, whether it's getting your heart rate up and down on the treadmill or doing bursts of plyometric exercises.
2. Take a moment to remind yourself of your wellness goals and the benefits you'll reap from regular exercise. If heart health wasn't on your list, add it!
3. Once a week, make exercise a social affair by working out with a friend, joining a walking club or trying a new activity.