



# 10 Fitness Tips to Help Prevent Heart Disease

When it comes to preventing cardiovascular disease, fitness is a powerful weapon. That's because a sedentary lifestyle is one of the risk factors for heart disease. Fitness works on several risk factors, keeping weight down, keeping cholesterol down and keeping blood pressure down. It actually makes the body more efficient in the extraction of oxygen, and therefore the heart doesn't have to work as hard.

## 1. Talk to your doctor

Before beginning a new routine, ask if you have any limitations and find out if there are types of exercise you should avoid.

## 2. Find an activity you enjoy

There are countless options out there that raise the heart rate – swimming, dancing, cycling, Zumba and more. While you want the activity to be strenuous, keep it at a level where you can hold a conversation while working out. Aim to exercise three to five hours a week.

## 3. Walk

Everyone on the planet should be walking at least 30 minutes every day. It doesn't have to be all at once – you can do three sets of 10 minutes or two sets of 15 minutes – but this keeps you moving and makes you less sedentary. Plus, it might even keep you from eating something that could raise your cholesterol.

## 4. Reap the rewards

Exercise probably has more benefits above the neck than below. It's a great stress reducer – far better than smoking, alcohol and chocolate. Remembering that can be a great motivator to stick with your routine.

## 5. Fit it into your schedule

Exercise has a half-life. The relaxing benefits, lowered blood pressure and other perks stick around for about 48 hours. After that, you'll need to get another exercise "fix" to keep the perks going.

## **6. Small steps add up**

Working out doesn't have to be an event. It doesn't even have to involve changing your clothes. It can be as simple as walking around during your child's soccer game, rather than sitting in a chair and eating potato chips. Take the stairs instead of an escalator. Park further back at the mall; when you see opportunities to move, take advantage.

## **7. Set an example**

Go on a family bike ride or a family walk. Turn date night into exercise night. Fitness can be contagious. Plus, it's more fun when others join in.

## **8. There is no exercise bank**

So you say you ran a marathon two years ago? What did you do two days ago? The benefits of exercise don't last forever. You've got to keep replenishing your account.

## **9. Thin people need to exercise too**

Those who aren't overweight are often the most resistant to exercise. But just because you don't have excess fat, doesn't mean you're in good shape. People of all sizes should make fitness a priority.

## **10. Fitness is not an issue of vanity**

It's an issue of health. Many women struggle to make time for themselves to exercise because they equate getting in shape with appearance. If you broke your arm, you would go to physical therapy. If you have a cardiac problem and exercise is prescribed to you, it is just as important.