

# NEED TO GET MOVING? START SLOWLY

- It's important to stay active, even if you haven't been in the past or are recovering from an illness or injury. Physical activity can help increase your energy and improve your overall physical and mental health.
- Even a short 10-minute walk can help reduce tiredness and stress and improve your mood.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that adults aim for at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity activity, such as walking, and include strength training sessions. You can break this time into small chunks, like 30 minutes a day, five days a week.
- If you have a chronic medical condition, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program.

## Low-cost workouts

You don't have to join a gym to work out. Low- or no-cost options include:

### Walking

- Stroll around your neighborhood or through the mall. Park at the back of the parking lot rather than by the door. Choose the stairs.

### Clean sweep

- Housework can do double duty if you can get your heart rate up. Mowing, shoveling and gardening count too.

### Child's play

- Engage your kids in a game of tag, a bike ride or an after-dinner dance party. Moving with your kids sets a good example for a lifetime of healthy activity.

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## Bring the gym home

It may be difficult to find time to exercise regularly with busy lives. Gym membership costs also may be a drawback.

The good news is these five inexpensive workout items can be used at home to get you started:

### 1. Jump rope

- Jumping rope gets your heart pumping and offers a great cardiovascular workout. When the weather is not the best for an outdoor walk or jog, a jump rope can be a great indoor option. Jumping rope can be performed by people at any fitness level.

### 2. Mat

- Mats can protect your back and joints from hard surfaces during your workout. Mats provide a layer of cushion for floor-based exercises, such as yoga, core strengthening or a stretching cooldown after your workout.

### 3. Dumbbells

- Dumbbells come in various weights and designs. Choose weights that offer a little challenge, and keep them handy. You could curl your way through a commercial break while watching TV or use them first thing in the morning.

### 4. Resistance bands

- Using resistance bands can improve your strength and muscle tone. They're lightweight, take up little space and can easily travel with you for work or vacation.

### 5. Stability ball

- This piece of equipment will strengthen your core, which is important for the health of your lower back. Stronger back and abdominal muscles also will improve your balance and stability to help you continue moving safely and confidently as you age.

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No matter what form of exercise you choose, the most important thing is to get started. Remember to focus on the process, not just the results, and be patient with yourself as you get moving.

Chaun Cox, M. D. (2024b, June 10). Need to get moving? start slowly. Mayo Clinic Health System. <https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/doctors-orders/need-to-exercise-start-slowly>

# ISOMETRIC EXERCISE: USING BODY WEIGHT TO LOWER BLOOD PRESSURE

## **What is isometric exercise?**

Isometric exercise involves tightening specific muscles without moving the joints. It can improve strength and stability for injury recovery and arthritis. Contrary to a common misconception, it does not involve holding your breath and can help lower high blood pressure.

## **Why is blood pressure important?**

High blood pressure is harmful because it makes the heart work harder and less efficiently. For a quick review of blood pressure, there are two key numbers when measuring your blood pressure: systolic and diastolic.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention define these as:

### **Systolic blood pressure**

- Measures the maximum pressure in the arteries as the heart contracts and relaxes.

### **Diastolic blood pressure**

- Measures the arterial pressure when the heart rests between beats.

Healthy blood pressure is less than 120/80 mm Hg.

## **What are the new research findings about exercise and blood pressure?**

In a study published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine, researchers found that isometric exercise led to the most significant reductions in blood pressure. The study reviewed 270 trials with 15,827 participants between 1990 and 2023.

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## How can you build isometric exercise into your workout?

### Wall sit

Stand with your back toward a wall. Step out about 2 feet from the wall. Place your feet firmly on the ground and shoulder-width apart. Slide your back down the wall while keeping your abdominal muscles tight and bending your legs until they're at 90 degrees or a right angle. It's like sitting in a chair without the chair. Check that your knees are straight above your ankles. This exercise focuses on your glutes, or buttock, muscles and quadriceps, or thigh, muscles, as well as your abdominal or core muscles.

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### Planks

#### Wall plank

- Stand facing a wall. Place your elbows and forearms on the wall. Take a step back, tuck in your bottom, and tighten your abdominal muscles by pulling your belly button into your spine. Hold for 20 seconds.

#### Floor plank on knees

- Lie on your stomach and prop yourself up slightly on your forearms. Using your knees and forearms, lift your hips off the floor to about the same height as your shoulders. Hold this position, focusing on using your core muscles, for 20 seconds. To progress to a harder version, press your toes into the floor, then lift your knees off the floor and squeeze your glutes and core to create a plank that involves full-body tension. Think about pulling your belly button into your spine.

Planks focus on your back, shoulders and abdominal muscles.

Melinda Hahm, A.-C. (2024, June 10). Isometric exercise and blood pressure. Mayo Clinic Health System. <https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/isometric-exercise-and-blood-pressure>

# EXERCISE FOR YOUR HEART

DATE	TYPE OF AEROBIC ACTIVITY	TOTAL MINUTES	HOW I FELT BEFORE	HOW I FELT AFTER