



♥ Heart-Healthy Exercise Guide ♥

Important Simple, Safe Movement for a Stronger Heart

Why Exercise Matters

Regular physical activity can:

✓ **Strengthen the heart muscle**

- A stronger heart pumps more blood with less effort, lowering strain on the heart.

✓ **Lower blood pressure**

- Exercise helps blood vessels stay flexible and open, reducing pressure inside the arteries.

✓ **Improve cholesterol levels**

- Raises HDL (“good” cholesterol) and helps lower LDL (“bad” cholesterol), reducing plaque buildup.

✓ **Improve circulation**

- Keeps blood flowing smoothly, delivering oxygen to your heart, brain, and muscles.

✓ **Help control blood sugar**

- Active muscles use glucose for energy, lowering the risk of type 2 diabetes.

✓ **Reduce risk of heart attack and stroke**

- Regular movement helps prevent artery narrowing and clot formation.

✓ **Support healthy weight, muscle mass, and strength**

- Maintains strength, prevents falls, and makes everyday movements easier.

✓ **Improve mood and reduce stress**

- Physical activity lowers stress hormones and improves sleep.

✓ **Maintain independence**

- Stronger legs and better balance make everyday activities easier and reduce fall risk.

Recommended Activity Levels

The American Heart Association recommends:

- 150 minutes per week of moderate activity
 - o Example: 30-50 minutes, 3-5 days per week
 - If you are new to exercise:
 - o Start with 10-15 minutes
 - o Gradually increase duration as tolerated.
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Weekly Exercise Goals Made Simple

Aim to include a combination of:

- ❤️ Aerobic exercise (heart-pumping activity)
- 💪 Strength training (muscle building)
- ⚖️ Balance training (fall prevention)

Consistency is more important than intensity. Even small amounts of activity provide meaningful health benefits.

❤️ Aerobic Exercises (3–5 days per week)

- **Walking**
 - o 10–30 minutes
 - o Moderate pace (able to talk, but not sing)
 - **Marching in Place**
 - o 30–60 seconds
 - o Repeat 2–3 times
 - **Stationary Bike** (if available)
 - o 10–20 minutes
 - o Light to moderate intensity
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💪 Strength Exercises (2–3 days per week)

- **Chair Squats**

- 2–3 sets
 - 8–12 repetitions
 - **Shoulder Press** (using cans or water bottles)
 - 2–3 sets
 - 8–12 repetitions
 - **Heel Raises** (holding a chair for support)
 - 2–3 sets
 - 10–15 repetitions
 - **Seated Leg Extensions**
 - 2 sets
 - 10–15 repetitions per leg
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Balance Exercises (Practice daily if possible)

Use a counter or chair for support and safety.

- **Single-Leg Stand**
 - Hold 10–20 seconds
 - Repeat twice per leg
 - **Heel-to-Toe Walk**
 - 10 steps
 - Repeat twice
 - **Side Leg Raises**
 - 2 sets
 - 10 repetitions
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Sample 20-Minute Routine

- **Warm-Up (3–5 minutes)**
 - March in place
 - Shoulder rolls
 - Arm circles
- **Main Circuit (Repeat 2–3 times)**
 - Chair squats – 10 repetitions
 - Wall push-ups – 10 repetitions



- March in place – 30 seconds
- Heel raises – 12 repetitions
- **Cool Down (3 minutes)**
 - Slow marching
 - Gentle stretching
 - Deep breathing

Safety Tips

Stop exercising and seek medical care if you experience:

- Chest pain
- Severe shortness of breath
- Dizziness
- Irregular heartbeat

Consult your healthcare provider before starting an exercise program if you have:

- Recent heart event
- Uncontrolled blood pressure
- Severe joint pain

Contact the Cardiac Rehabilitation Team:

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