

Tips for Increasing Your Physical Activity to Prevent Heart Disease

The National Lipid Association Recommendations^{1,2} emphasize lifestyle therapies as a cornerstone to prevent heart disease. Lifestyle therapies include physical activity. Being physically active every day is the best way to lower the triglycerides in your blood. Higher amounts of physical activity can help lower low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol in your blood and manage other heart disease risk factors like losing excess body fat if you have weight to lose and improving your blood pressure. Be sure to check with your doctor before you start to exercise. **If you are not currently exercising at all, start with just a few minutes of light activity at a time.**

Table 1. Examples of weekly physical activity programs and calories burned³

Plan 1 to burn 600-800 calories/week*

Monday, Wednesday, Friday: Walk 2 miles/day = 600 calories**

Sunday: 20 minutes of low-level stationary cycling = 100 calories

Plan 2 to burn 1,000-1,200 calories/week*

Monday, Wednesday, Friday: Walk 2 miles/day = 600 calories

Tuesday: Walk 3 miles = 300 calories

Sunday: Nine holes of golf or 30 minutes of singles tennis = 300 calories

Plan 3 to burn 1,500-1,800 calories/week*

Monday, Wednesday, Friday: Walk 3 miles/day = 900 calories

Tuesday & Thursday: 30 minutes of cycling each day = 300 calories

Sunday: 60 minutes of singles tennis plus 2-mile walk = 500 calories

Plan 4 to burn 2,000+ calories/week*

5 days a week, average a 300 calorie workout (e.g., 30-to 45-minute sustained aerobic activity) = 1500 calories

1 day/week perform long, slow distance workout (e.g., two-hour moderate- to fast-paced, variable-terrain walk) = 600+ kcal

*Assumes 160- to 180-pound body weight; heavier people burn more calories with the same exercise

**Walking at moderate pace (2.5-3.5 mph)

For overall heart-health and other health benefits:

Achieve 150 minutes per week of moderate intensity aerobic activity or 75 minutes per week of vigorous activity.

- You can achieve 150 minutes of activity each week by doing 30 minutes of activity on 5 days each week.
- If you are able to do more vigorous intensity aerobic activity, you can do a minimum of 25 minutes on 3 days each week.
- You can also do a mix of moderate and vigorous intensity activity.
- The important thing is to do something active every day, if possible, or at least every other day.
- Examples of moderate aerobic activity are brisk walking, hiking on trails with little incline, light-effort bicycling (10-12 mph), doubles tennis, and heavy house chores (mopping, vacuuming).
- Examples of vigorous aerobic activity are hiking on trails with steeper incline, jogging, fast bicycling (14-16 mph), and singles tennis.
- See Table 1 for examples for fitting physical activity into your weekly routine.

Resistance exercise (i.e., strength training-type exercise) is also recommended to help maintain your strength, balance, and bone density.

To lower your LDL cholesterol level:

Burn 2000 or more calories per week in moderate or higher intensity physical activity.

- You can burn 2000 or more calories each week by participating in 200 to 300 minutes of moderate or higher intensity physical activity each day (see Table 1).
- You are also more likely to achieve body fat loss and weight maintenance by expending 2000 or more calories each week.

*National Lipid Association Lifestyle Recommendations Writing Group members: Julie Bolick, MS, RDN, CLS, FNLA; Mary Dicklin, PhD, ; Carol Kirkpatrick, PhD, RDN, CLS, FNLA; Penny Kris-Etherton, PhD, RDN, CLS, FNLA; Ralph LaForge, MSc, CLS, FNLA; Kevin Maki, PhD, CLS, FNLA; Kathy Rhodes, PhD, RDN; Geeta Sikand, MA, RDN, CDE, CLS, FNLA; Nancy Smith, MS, RDN, CDE, CLS

References

1. Jacobson TA, Ito MK, Maki KC, et al. National Lipid Association recommendations for patient-centered management of dyslipidemia: part 1 – full report. *J Clin Lipidol*. 2015;9:129-69.
2. (In press). National Lipid Association recommendations for patient-centered management of dyslipidemia: part 2. *J Clin Lipidol*. 2015.
3. LaForge R. Exercise and dyslipidemia: How much exercise? *LipidSpin*. 2011 (Winter);9(1):14-15

