

KICK YOUR CHOLESTEROL INTO SHAPE

If you're watching your cholesterol numbers, you probably already know that elevated levels of LDL (low-density lipoprotein) and low HDL (high-density lipoprotein) can put you at an increased risk for coronary artery disease. Luckily, there are a number of ways physical activity can help keep your cholesterol in the low-risk range. Here's some pointers on how to do it.

Don't Sit on the Sidelines:

You're not just missing out on a chance to improve your health by remaining sedentary; you can actually deteriorate your health and make your cholesterol numbers worse. Six months of sitting around doing nothing can significantly increase LDL levels and make that "lousy" stuff even more dangerous.

Find Your Fitness Sweet Spot:

What should you be doing for exercise?

If you have high triglycerides:

Go for a walk. Modest amounts of moderate exercise (walking briskly for 30 minutes five days) had the greatest effect on lowering triglyceride levels.

If you need to ramp up your HDL:

Take the stairs. While any kind of exercise is going to boost your good cholesterol, vigorous exercise like jogging or walking up an incline can really make a difference. Try adding some interval training like adding some uphill segments or inserting a brief jog into your walk to get your heart rate up.

If you want to lower your LDL:

The jury is still out on whether exercise can have any real sustainable effect on lowering your LDL cholesterol. Exercise will at least help you hold the line on LDL while you improve your other cholesterol factors.

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