


EXERCISE YOUR WAY TO A HEALTHY HEART

Aerobic Exercise

Aerobic exercise improves circulation, which results in lowered blood pressure and heart rate, Stewart says. In addition, it increases your overall aerobic fitness, as measured by a treadmill test, for example, and it helps your cardiac output (how well your heart pumps). Aerobic exercise also reduces the risk of type 2 diabetes and, if you already live with diabetes, helps you control your blood glucose. Ideally, you should at least exercise 30 minutes a day, at least five days a week. Some examples of Aerobic exercise: Brisk walking, running, swimming, cycling, playing tennis and jumping rope. Heart-pumping aerobic exercise is the kind that doctors have in mind when they recommend at least 150 minutes per week of moderate activity.

Resistance Training (Strength Work)

Resistance training has a more specific effect on body composition, Stewart says. For people who are carrying a lot of body fat (including a big belly, which is a risk factor for heart disease), it can help reduce fat and create leaner muscle mass. Research shows that a combination of aerobic exercise and resistance work may help raise HDL (good) cholesterol and lower LDL bad) cholesterol. Ideally, you should at least have two nonconsecutive days per week of resistance training is a good rule of thumb, according to the American College of Sports Medicine. Working out with free weights (such as hand weights, dumbbells or barbells), on weight machines, with resistance bands or through body-resistance exercises, such as push-ups, squats and chin-ups are great sources of Resistance Training.

Stretching, Flexibility and Balance

Flexibility workouts, such as stretching, don’t directly contribute to heart health. What they do is benefit musculoskeletal health, which enables you to stay flexible and free from joint pain, cramping and other muscular issues. As a bonus, flexibility and balance exercises help maintain stability and prevent falls, which can cause injuries that limit other kinds of exercise.