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Did You Know? Exercise Benefits Blood Pressure

One of the more successful and inexpensive forms of blood pressure control is exercise. Regular exercise helps keep arteries elastic, which ensures blood flow and normal blood pressure. To keep the arteries healthy and, consequently, blood pressure in check, doctors recommend at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise on most days.



Summer provides some great options to get outside and get healthy at the same time. Help lower your blood pressure while enjoying one of these outdoor activities:

- **Walking** – Take a stroll. Walking is low impact, so that also means it's easier on your joints than some other forms of exercise.
- **Biking** – Take a ride. Check out paved bike trails in your community for a safe, leisurely ride and a wonderful way to get outside and exercise.
- **Swimming** – Take some laps. Swimming is easy on the joints and a great choice for cardio. If swimming isn't for you, stay in the shallow end and walk or lunge your way across!
- **Roller-skating** – Take a spin. Roller-skating isn't just for kids; it's a terrific form of exercise for adults too!

Five Small Steps to Reduce Stress

Often in our busy, fast-paced lives, making large changes to reduce stress can seem more overwhelming than helpful. So, why not start small with one of these five suggestions?

1. **Take a Technology Break** – Turn off your electronics – cell phones, tablets, televisions – and just relax. Enjoy the peaceful quiet.
2. **Breathe Deeply** – Breathe in through your nose and count to seven. Hold that breathe for seven more counts. Breathe out through your mouth another seven seconds. You can do this anytime, anywhere as an effective calming technique.
3. **Share a Hug** – Give your spouse, partner, child or friend a hug. The physical contact and positive interaction can provide an emotional boost.
4. **Prepare for Tomorrow** – Take 5-10 minutes the night before to prepare lunches, organize work items, ready your clothes for the next day, etc. All of these things can help result in a more peaceful morning and a better start to your day.
5. **Go Outdoors** – Spend time outside. Enjoying the fresh air can promote a positive perspective.

Emotional Health & Blood Pressure: Stay Up to Keep It Down

For years, doctors and researchers have been aware of the connection between stress and high blood pressure. People who suffer from health issues such as depression and anxiety may be more at risk for experiencing a heart attack or stroke. The reverse also can be true. Those who have had a heart attack or stroke also may suffer from depression and anxiety as they are recuperating and trying to regain their health.

Taking care of your emotional well-being is an important piece of caring for your whole self, including managing your blood pressure. Consider these suggestions:



Talk with your doctor.

Share with your physician how you really are feeling. Most of us are good at minimizing how we feel and mistakenly assume our doctor doesn't really have time to hear about those things. It is important your doctor know as much as possible to provide you with the best care.

Be good to yourself.

What nurtures you? What fills you with joy and brings peace to your life? Identify these things and find ways to incorporate more of them into your life.

Be good to others.

Smile! Happiness is contagious and can do so much for our mood and our physical health. Compliment a coworker on a job well done. Share successes with your kids. Appreciate your spouse or partner when they take out the trash or do the dishes. When we give to others, we also benefit.

Recognize your stress.

Once you identify what causes you stress, you can combat it. Incorporate some stress-busting techniques into your daily life: exercise, meditate, talk with your friends and family, eat well, get enough sleep, and make relaxation a priority.

Request help.

If you continue to struggle and feel overwhelmed, consider getting some extra assistance. Access your employer's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) – such as TriHealth CONCERN Services – if offered. If your company does not have an EAP, check what mental health benefits may be available through your insurance provider. Many communities and church organizations also have mental health information lines to help direct callers to available resources.