

THE 10 Rules of Exercising with HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

A PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLE BY B.J. FOX

1 You can't afford NOT to exercise!
For those who don't think they can make time for exercise...the best time is now!

"In cardiovascular disease, there is no replacement for lifestyle change. Regular moderate exercise 5-7 times a week for 45-60 minutes is an integral part of that change."

~ DR. NARESH KUMAR, CARDIOLOGIST

Can you afford to take time off from other commitments, and make time for the benefits of exercise?:

- it boosts your daily energy
- heightens mental function
- improves sleep
- increases strength
- and burns fat!

In addition, regular exercise has been shown to decrease risk of dying from heart disease by a staggering 50%! (Bryan and Peterson, 1996).

Could anything else possibly give you a better return on your time investment?

2 Get Physician Clearance First

A doctor needs to consider your special health considerations and the impact of your medications before making a decision on your exercise readiness. Always have a doctor's consent before beginning an exercise program. If working with a personal trainer, give them your doctors contact information so that they can discuss the best exercise approach for you, and maintain constant communication throughout.

Your Doctor is also likely to make some dietary recommendations. Common dietary advice for lowering blood pressure is based on the Dash Diet or the Mediterranean Diet, and involves:

- Consuming lots of fruits, vegetables, legumes, and grains.
- Having extra virgin olive oil, nuts and seeds as the primary source of fat.
- Limiting consumption of processed salt, fast food, dairy products, and red meat.

3 Weight Training is Best Exercise lowers blood pressure by improving the elasticity of the blood vessels, giving more flexibility and providing less resistance to blood flow.

"The best way to improve flexibility of the vascular system is to use short bursts of elevation followed by sudden recovery, then demanding activity again."

~ VASCULAR SURGEON IRVING DIRDIK

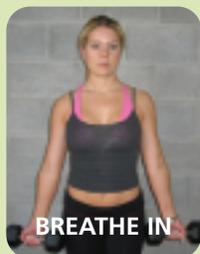
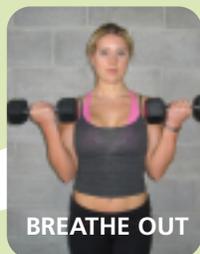
The research shows that steady, lower intensity exercise such as walking and stair climbing may work, but there is a greater benefits with weight training, due to its intermittent bursts of effort.

4 Warm Up Prevent a sudden rise in blood pressure by doing a proper warm-up. A simple warm up can involve performing brisk cardio for 5-10 minutes, gradually increasing the intensity until you are on the brink of sweating.

5 Drink Before You're Thirsty
Our thirst mechanisms are so slow that by the time you become thirsty, you are already significantly dehydrated. A portion of the water lost comes from the blood volume, leaving it more concentrated, and sludgy. This increases the blood's resistance to flow, and can boost blood pressure in the process. So sip water constantly during your workouts, regardless of whether you're actually thirsty.

6 Don't Lift Too Heavy Research has shown that lifting maximal loads can cause the blood pressure to escalate extremely high. Use loads that are light enough that you can lift them under control for a minimum of 6 repetitions.

7 Breathe! It can be common for exercisers to instinctively hold their breath during a specific exercise, creating pressure to cushion and support the spine. However, to prevent blood pressure from skyrocketing, hypertensive individuals should never hold their breath during exercise. However, breathing through pursed lips helps maintain the supportive pressure while keeping the blood pressure in check.



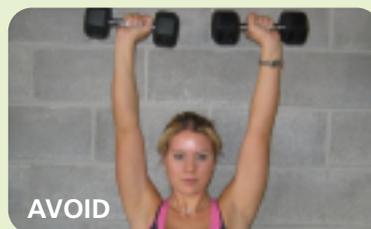
When exercising:

- Breathe out as you do the work
- Breathe in as you return the weight to the starting position.

For example, if doing a bicep curl, you would breathe out as you curl the weight up, and breathe in and as you lower the weight back down.

8 Stay Away from Harmful Exercises
There are a number of exercises that require extra caution due to their potential to raise blood pressure. These exercises should only be used under a physician's advice, or avoided altogether:

a Avoid exercises with the arms or legs overhead



b Avoid the Leg Press:



c Avoid exercises where you maintain a stationary position:



9 Cool Down at the End During the exercise, much of the blood may pool in the muscles. A sudden stop in physical activity could cause one to faint as a result of a sharp drop in blood pressure. It is important to incorporate a 10-20 minute cardio cool down to normalize blood pressure, while burning some extra fat in the process. Keep the intensity low enough that you would be able to engage in conversation if necessary.

10 Take Your Car for a Tune-Up!

Many people spend thousands upon thousands on a top model car: they do upgrades; repair knicks and scratches; take it in for regular oil checks; etc. But at the end of the day they always step out of that “slick looking” car, and find themselves stuck in an “old jalopy” of a body.

Your wealth is your health.

After all, if your car breaks down you can always get a new one, but if you let your body break down... how are you going to get around?

“At about the time I had my heart attack, my blood pressure was about 160 over 110, and my resting heart rate was 85 beats per minute. As a result of regular exercise, and sensible eating, my blood pressure is now 120 over 70, I have a resting heart rate of 61 beats per minute, and I’ve lost 38 pounds.”

~ ED BUFFETT, CEO

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

B.J. Fox is a Kinesiologist who holds 14 fitness related certifications. He specializes in providing personal fitness training and lifestyle coaching in the Greater Toronto Area, servicing clients with special health considerations such as heart disease and high blood pressure. For more information and free articles, visit www.FoxFitness.ca

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