

YOUR CARE POLMED

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Exercise to help manage hypertension



In South Africa, **27.4% of men and 26.1% of women live with hypertension**. Uncontrolled hypertension can place your health at risk. It increases your risk of a heart attack, stroke and even kidney damage.

In addition to taking your medication, adjusting your diet, maintaining a healthy weight, exercising will also help manage your condition.

Won't exercise raise my blood pressure?

"Exercise is good for the maintenance of both healthy heart function and keeping the blood vessels normal", explains cardiologist Dr Leonard Steingo. This can help to maintain healthy blood pressure levels.

Exercises for hypertension

Those with hypertension should aim for at least 30 minutes of aerobic exercise per day and strength training once per week.

Aerobic exercise – brisk walking:

Aerobic exercises focus on your heart health. It encourages the body to pump more oxygen. Daily brisk walking for 30 minutes can help lower blood pressure.

Strength training:

Strength training can help to lower blood pressure in people who have hypertension.

It helps build muscle and an increase in muscle mass has been found to help regulate blood pressure.

- Use lighter weights as heavier weights can significantly raise blood pressure.
- If you don't have dumbbells, you can use canned goods or plastic bottles filled with water.
- Don't hold your breath when lifting weights as this can significantly raise your blood pressure and cause you to become dizzy. Instead, breathe easily and continuously as you lift.

Red flags

Stop exercising immediately and call your doctor if you begin to experience any of the following symptoms:

- shortness of breath accompanied by chest pain and wheezing
- light-headedness

Before starting any exercise programme, it's essential first to consult your doctor and a biokineticist. Along with your doctor, a biokineticist will evaluate your health and recommend a suitable exercise plan to help manage your condition.



References:

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