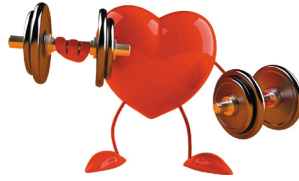


Helen to the Rescue

Keep Your Heart Healthy

By Helen Pufahl MS, NASM-CPT Resident Contributor

Your heart is an amazing muscle that beats roughly 100,000 times a day, pumping 1,800 gallons of blood through more than 60,000 miles of blood vessels. This pumping can adjust blood pressure, flow, and volume providing your body with all the blood it needs. Your heart is constantly adjusting the rate and force at which it pumps based on your activity level and the state of your body.



In 2019, the CDC put heart disease as the number one killer in the US. Demanding jobs, busy family schedules, and even a belief that we still have time to get back into shape, are all excuses that can lead us to a more sedentary lifestyle. The American Heart Association anticipates a 46% increase in new cases by 2030. There's good news; it's never too late to help your heart health.

How Exercise Helps the Aging Heart

When you exercise, the exertion forces your heart to pump more blood around your body to your muscles and lungs. The entire process relaxes blood vessels over time and makes your heart run more efficiently. It works like a beta-blocker to slow the heart rate and lower blood pressure.

Tips for a Healthy Heart

- Getting at least 150 minutes of physical activity a week
- Eating heart-healthy foods, including vegetables, fruits, nuts and seeds, legumes, whole grains, and lean protein, especially fish
- Limiting salt in your diet
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Lowering your blood pressure
- Improving your cholesterol
- Avoid smoking

Doing any kind of exercise can help improve heart health. Start with a simple walking program of 5 to 10 minutes a day, then increase that to at least 30 minutes a day. Try anything to get you started and ensure it's something you can maintain. Don't make it complicated!

Try these activities:

- Stairs: Walking or running upstairs
- Biking: A great aerobic exercise that utilizes the large muscles in your legs
- Swimming: Talk about a full-body workout!! Swimming is the perfect aerobic exercise for building stamina and heart health.

- Elliptical Machine: elliptical steppers can exercise your upper and lower body at the same time while increasing your heart rate.
- Dance: Take your spouse or partner out on the town for a night of dancing for a great heart-healthy aerobic workout while having a great time.
- Videogame: Believe it or not, aerobic exercise for your heart can come from a videogame console such as the Nintendo Wii. These interactive video games can incorporate yoga and dance to increase your heart rate and aerobic activity.

Prevention is better than cure.

Yours in Fitness,

Helen Pufahl



Helen's love of fitness began at an early age. She practiced dance, gymnastics, as well as, track and field. She's an Exercise Physiologist with over 35 years of experience. She is also a certified personal trainer, corrective exercise specialist, nutrition consultant, and Senior fitness specialist. Owner: Unique Health & Fitness

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