



# 6 Ways to Get Creative with Your Cardio

**Ever heard the saying that “a body at rest is likely to stay at rest?”** The opposite is true, too. Get your body moving and you’re likely to stay moving, reaping a host of health benefits as well. Cardiovascular exercise, or “cardio,” is activity using the major muscle groups of your body and raising your heart rate for a sustained period.

## Why Cardio?

Cardio burns calories and helps you maintain a healthy body weight. It can also help lower your blood pressure; raise your HDL, or good, cholesterol levels; and reduce your risk for heart disease and heart attacks. Regular cardio activity is good for your mental health, too. It may reduce your risk for depression, may help you sleep better and may keep your brain sharp as you age.

Aim for at least 2 1/2 hours per week of moderate-intensity physical activity (like walking briskly) or one hour and 15 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity (like jogging), or a mix of both. Think creatively and you can fit different types of cardio into your day. Try these tips:

- 1 Get those steps.** Running errands? Park at the farthest end of the parking lot and add a couple of minutes of walking to your day.
- 2 Grab some drumsticks.** Try a cardio drumming class. This workout will get your heart rate up and can be modified for any fitness level.
- 3 Dance it off.** Try Zumba, a high-energy dance class. No time for class? Cue up your favorite music and take a five-minute dance break.
- 4 Get up from the couch.** Do you spend too much time sitting? Instead, walk in place or do a set of slow, controlled squats.
- 5 Walk and talk.** Meeting someone for coffee? Grab it to go and take a walk. You’ll catch up while you sneak in extra steps.
- 6 Get wet.** Swimming is a fun way to move your body. Water exercise classes are a great option if you have joint or mobility issues, too.

If you’ve been inactive or are planning on upping your activity level, talk with your doctor about the amount and type of exercise that’s right for you.

*Sources include National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; National Institutes of Health; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; U.S. Department of Agriculture and Journal of Sports Science and Medicine.*

*Developed by StayWell*

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