



FROM HEAD TO TOE: The Benefits of Cardio Exercise

Regular cardiovascular exercise is a 30-minute workout 5 or more days a week that increases your heart rate. Or try 3, 10-minute workouts 5+ days a week.

You know cardio benefits your heart, but that's not all. Here we take a look at how it affects your entire body:

Brain

- + Increases blood flow and decreases chances of stroke
- + Improves memory and thinking ability
- + Combats decline in brain functioning with age
- + Helps protect against developing Alzheimer's disease

Skin

- + Increases circulation, leading to clearer, healthier skin

Blood

- + Helps control blood sugar
- + Improves "good" cholesterol levels and lowers blood fats

Muscles

- + Increases oxygen supply, allowing muscles to work harder
- + Allows muscles to adapt to an increased workload, making regular activities seem easier

Pancreas

- + Improves blood sugar control
- + Decreases stress on the pancreas
- + Reduces your chance of developing type 2 diabetes

Lungs

- + Helps decrease demands on lungs as exercise ability improves
- + Helps reduce fatigue and shortness of breath in those chronic lung problems

Weight

- + Helps you maintain a healthy weight by burning more calories throughout the day

Sexual Function

- + Decreases the chances of erectile dysfunction in men
- + Leads to enhanced arousal for women

Bones & Joints

- + Fights osteoporosis and reduces chances for a hip fracture
- + Helps manage arthritis discomfort and maintains joint range of motion

And that's not all. Check out these additional benefits:

Mood

Boosts your mood, especially after a stressful day

- + Combats depression
- + Improves your self-esteem

Anxiety & stress

Releases tension-fighting hormones: serotonin, dopamine and norepinephrine

Sleep

Helps you doze off faster and promotes REM sleep. But avoid rigorous exercise too close to bed, or you'll be too energized to count sheep!

Energy

Releases endorphins, giving you more, lasting energy throughout your day

Lace up those tennis shoes, you'll not only boost your immune system — helping you steer clear of the cold or flu — but increase your chance of living longer!

SOURCE:

my.clevelandclinic.org/services/heart/prevention/exercise/exercise-for-your-heart-health