



to reduce your risk of heart
and circulatory diseases



Physical activity and heart and circulatory diseases

Heart and circulatory diseases kill 1 in 4 people in the UK. Not being active enough is one of the reasons people get heart and circulatory diseases like heart attack and stroke.

This leaflet is for people at risk of heart and circulatory diseases because they are not active enough. Their risk is increased by being overweight, having high cholesterol, having high blood pressure or Type 2 diabetes. Getting your body moving is one important way to improve your heart health.

“I JUST DO
25 MINUTES AT
HOME OF AN
EXERCISE DVD,
AND I SWIM
EVERY SUNDAY.
IT’S MADE ALL
THE DIFFERENCE.”

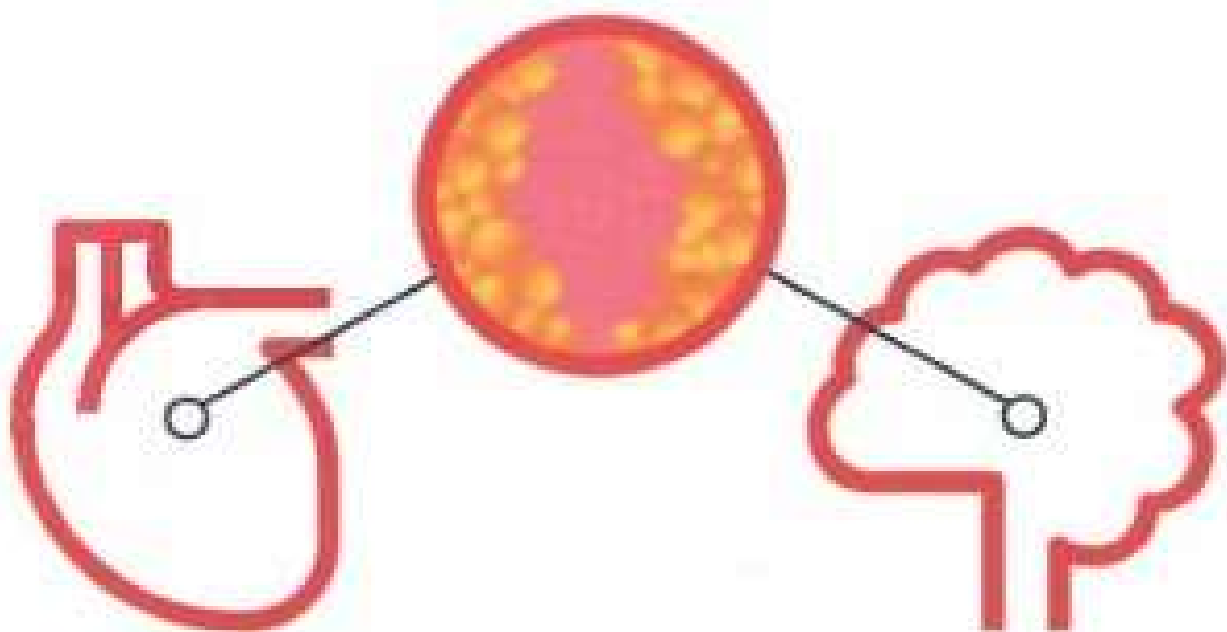
Jasmine, age 57



What are heart and circulatory diseases?

Heart and circulatory diseases include conditions such as angina, heart attacks, strokes and vascular dementia.

Being inactive can lead to fatty material building up in your arteries (the blood vessels that carry blood to your organs). If the arteries that carry blood to your heart get damaged and clogged, it can lead to a heart attack. If this happens in the arteries that carry blood to your brain it can lead to a stroke. The good news is there are ways to reduce the risk of this happening.



Artery in the heart getting blocked

Artery in the brain getting blocked

You can reduce your risk of
heart and circulatory diseases by

35%

by being more physically active.

Why should I be active?

High blood pressure, high cholesterol and Type 2 diabetes all increase the risk of developing heart and circulatory diseases. Being regularly physically active helps you to reduce your risk of developing these conditions.



How does physical activity reduce risk?

High blood pressure

Regular physical activity makes your heart stronger. A stronger heart can pump more blood with less effort. This means there is less pressure on your arteries (the blood vessels that take blood to your major organs), which helps your blood pressure stay at a healthy level.

High cholesterol

Physical activity raises your levels of good cholesterol which carries away the bad cholesterol, so it is less likely to clog up your arteries and cause a heart attack or stroke.

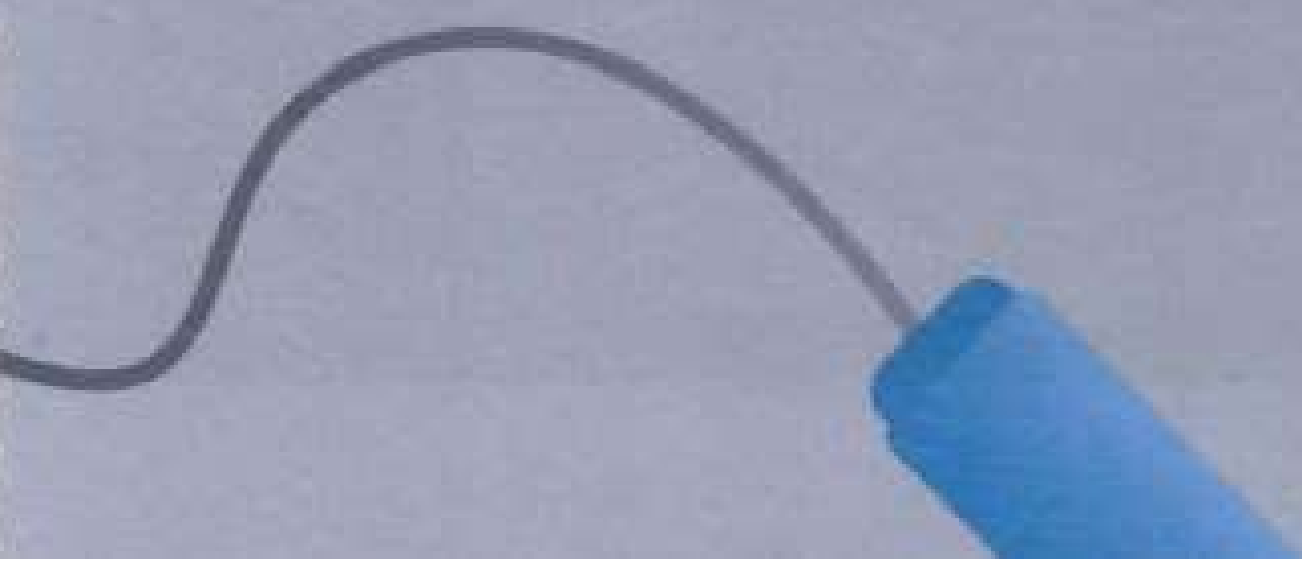
Type 2 diabetes

Physical activity helps you use up the extra glucose (sugar) in your blood. This can gradually lower your blood glucose levels.

Being overweight

If you need to manage your weight, being more physically active is important. Being active increases the number of calories you burn, which will help you lose weight.

We are all at risk of heart and circulatory diseases, we should all make sure we move around enough. Aim for at least 30 minutes every day.



Feel great

Regular activity doesn't just protect your heart. You can use it as a way to catch up with friends or meet new people. It can help improve your general health and wellbeing too.

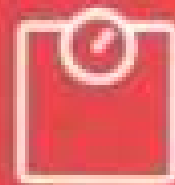
Get active and enjoy these benefits



Have more energy



Feel more relaxed



Achieve a healthier body weight



Sleep better



Have better concentration and memory



Feel more confident

bhf.org.uk

Heart transplants. Clot busting drugs. Pacemakers.
Breakthroughs born from visionary medical research.
Research you fund with your donations.

Heart and circulatory diseases kill 1 in 4 people
in the UK. They cause heartbreak on every street.
But if research can invent machines to restart hearts,
fix arteries in newborn babies, build tiny devices
to correct heartbeats, and give someone a heart
they weren't born with – imagine what's next.

We fund research into all heart and circulatory
diseases and their risk factors: Heart attacks,
heart failure, stroke, vascular dementia, diabetes
and many more. All connected, all under our
microscope. Our research is the promise of future
prevention, cures and treatments.

The promise to protect the people we love.
Our children. Our parents. Our brothers.
Our sisters. Our grandparents. Our closest friends.

You and the British Heart Foundation.
Together, we will beat heartbreak forever.

Beat heartbreak forever.

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and Wales (225471) and in Scotland (SC039426) L1007/0818

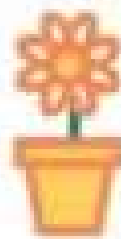
What counts as activity?

When we talk about being physically active, we don't mean putting on sports kit and joining the gym. You don't have to get hot and sweaty. We really are talking about getting up and moving around more.

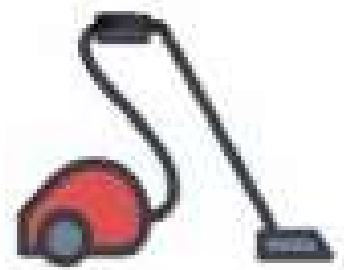
All these activities will help to improve your health:



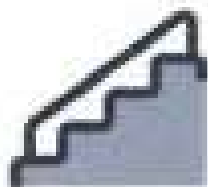
Walking



Gardening



Housework like vacuuming



Taking the stairs instead of the lift



Swimming



Cycling

Always look out for ways to get bursts of activity into your day.

How much is enough?

To reduce your risk of heart and circulatory diseases, you need to be active every day.

Aim to do 150 minutes of exercise a week – that's about 20–30 minutes a day.

Every time you are active for 10 minutes or more – it counts. Make sure you do 10-minute bursts to add up to at least 20–30 minutes a day.

Do something for 10 minutes or more that makes you:

- breathe harder
- feel warmer
- feel your heart beat faster.

You should still be able to hold a normal conversation while you are active.

Find time

Finding time can be tricky, but if you fit activity into things you're already doing, you'll be a lot more likely to get into a habit you want to stick to. This could mean walking to school or work instead of driving, getting off the bus a few stops early or taking the stairs instead of a lift. Try writing a list of everything you do in a day and see where you can slot in 10 minutes or more to be active.

Lots of little things build up to make a big difference.

Start small.



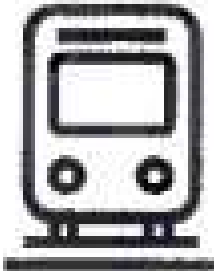
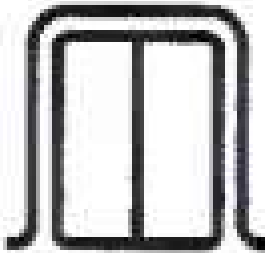
**Every
10 minutes
counts.**



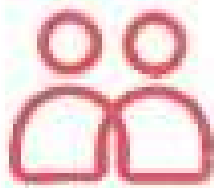
Seeing a difference

The best time to make a change is now. Think about what you can do right now to be active. You might not feel like it to start with but it gets easier over time, and in the end will just be a habit that you do without thinking about it.

Active vs sedentary lifestyle

Active	 <p data-bbox="384 1272 692 1375">Brisk walk to or from station</p>	 <p data-bbox="995 1272 1283 1321">Use the stairs</p>
Sedentary	 <p data-bbox="359 1839 724 1942">Car to station and train to work</p>	 <p data-bbox="944 1839 1337 1942">Using the lifts or escalators at work</p>

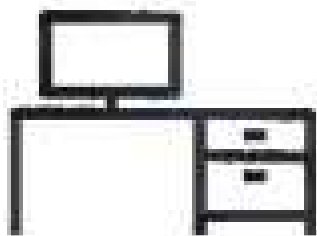
Get moving now and it will help you enjoy life more and keep your risk of cardiovascular diseases down.



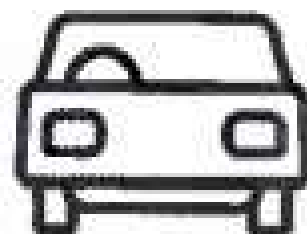
Go for a 15–30 minute walk with a colleague/friend



Brisk 20 minute walk home from the station



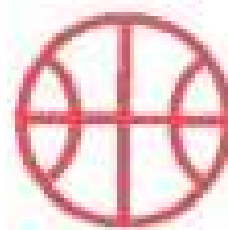
Stay in office during your lunch break



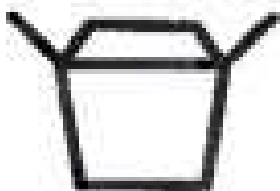
Getting picked up from the station



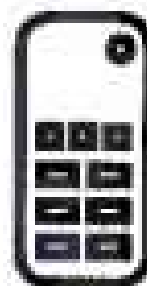
Preparing and
cooking food yourself
(30 mins)



Playing with
the children
(1 hour)



Ordering a
takeaway for dinner



Sitting down to
watch TV as a family