

# Exercise is Medicine

[getthehearthealthy.ca/exercise-is-medicine](http://getthehearthealthy.ca/exercise-is-medicine)

In this section you will learn:

- Why exercise is considered medicine
  - The benefits of engaging in regular exercise
  - General exercise guidelines
- Similar to prescribed medications, your exercise prescription is individualized, and includes a frequency, intensity, and duration

## Benefits of Engaging in Regular Exercise

### Cardiovascular

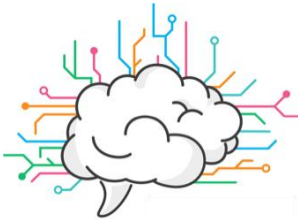
- Reduces the risk of developing cardiovascular disease
- Improves blood pressure values
- Improves cholesterol and triglyceride levels
- Improves general fitness, making activities of daily living easier, and allowing you to engage in the hobbies and activities you enjoy

### Diabetes

- Improves blood sugar control and insulin sensitivity
- Reduces the risk of developing type 2 diabetes

### Cognitive Function

- Improves blood flow to the brain
- Stimulates the growth of new blood vessels and nerve networks within the brain
- Improves memory, thinking skills, and ability to focus



Brain imaging studies have shown that areas in the brain that are responsible for thinking and memory are larger in those who engage in regular exercise, compared to those who do not.

### Mental Health

- Improves mood and emotional control
- Acts as an effective stress management tool
- Reduces the risk of developing anxiety, depression, and other mood disorders

When you exercise, your body releases chemicals called endorphins. Endorphins are often called “feel-good chemicals”, as they can elevate mood and reduce stress.

### Weight and Waist Circumference

- Helps you to achieve and maintain a healthy body weight and waist circumference

## Bone Health

- Improves bone health and strength
- Slows the rate of bone loss

The best exercises for building and maintaining bone health are weight-bearing and resistance training exercises.

## Other

- Improves sleep patterns and quality
- Reduces the risk of developing other health concerns (e.g., diabetes, osteoporosis, mood-disorders, cancer, etc.)

### Ask Yourself

Have you noticed any physical or mental changes since beginning your exercise program?

How many minutes of aerobic exercise are you completing each week?

How many resistance training sessions are you completing each week?

If you are over 65, are you incorporating balance training into your exercise routine?

## General Exercise Guidelines

- All physical activity is beneficial! This may include daily activities such as walking the dog, vacuuming, or gardening.
- The most beneficial activity for heart health is moderate to vigorous exercise for bouts of 10 minutes or more.



### Aerobic Exercise

Frequency	5 days/week
Intensity	RPE 12-14, or "somewhat hard"
Time	150-300 mins/week
Type	Walking, cycling, elliptical, swimming, etc.



### Balance Training



### Resistance Training

Frequency	2-4 days/week
Intensity	RPE 15-16, or "hard"
Time	15-20 mins/session
Type	Dumbbells, exercise bands, machines, household items, bodyweight, etc.