

Fitness: Aerobic Activity

Aerobic activity, also called cardiovascular or cardio, helps make your heart and lungs stronger. Making aerobics a part of your fitness routine will do a lot of good for your overall health.

With cardio activities, you know you're doing them when you breathe harder and your heart beats faster. It can lower your blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar, body fat, anxiety and depression, and fatigue.

Cardio also gives you the strength to do the things you like for longer, like a walk and talk with a friend, playing with your child, or exploring a new city.

Any exercise that raises your heart rate and keeps it up while you're exercising will improve your aerobic fitness. These exercises can include: walking, dancing, boxing, or cycling. Swimming and water aerobics count too.

Some daily activities can also be aerobic. These activities include: walking to work or to the store, or cleaning the house while listening to fast-paced music.

If your job includes lots of sitting, try adding these short bursts of activity to your day: use your commute to do some extra walking. Park several blocks away, or get off the bus a few stops early.

Go the extra distance when possible: Get your coffee on another floor. And use the stairs. Aside from cleaning the house or taking the stairs at work, try to choose activities that you enjoy. This will help you stay with your program and meet your goals.

To get and stay healthy, experts say to get moderate aerobic activity for at least 2 ½ hours per week.

You can decide how many days and how long you want to do cardio activities. An idea to try: you could take a 10-minute walk 3 times a day.

Now, if it's been a while since you've been active or have health problems, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor before adding aerobic activity to your day.

Your doctor will help you know how often and how long to exercise. You can also get help setting your long-term exercise goals.

From dancing in your kitchen to walking the dog, you may be surprised by all the activities that count as aerobic. You can avoid boredom by mixing up your routine and trying something new. Find what moves you and make it a fun part of every day for better health.