



Cardiovascular Health

Starts at Home

SPRING IS IN THE AIR AND THE WORLD IS COMING OUT OF ITS WINTER SLUMBER.

The blossoms have opened and people are back on the streets and in the parks, jogging and getting back into shape after winter hibernation. As our metabolism speeds up with the longer daylight hours and warmer temperatures, most people feel an urge to get back into cardiovascular shape around this time of year. For many people, the urge to go out and jog or run is both seductive and scary. But it's important to remember that cardiovascular fitness is as much minimizing risk factors as it is getting into cardiovascular shape. The mainstay of cardiovascular risk reduction is good blood pressure control and cholesterol control, in addition to reducing or avoiding tobacco and excess alcohol. These behaviors start in your living room and kitchen, not out at the track. Been snacking more, what with being cooped up at home for the last 4 months? Maybe gained a bit of winter weight noshing on fatty sweets and salty chips? Springtime is a great time to clear out your snack cupboard and restock it with healthy fruits and veggies that are coming into season. Your cholesterol profile will thank you. Maybe you've made having a drink (or two or three) a nightly ritual to warm yourself on those cold, cold nights? Well, alcohol (perhaps even more than salt) can be a potent trigger of high blood pressure, so now is a great time to cut down on alcohol; a home blood pressure cuff is an easy way to track cardiovascular progress at home. A log of blood pressures also provides a useful, objective metric to share with your doctor, who can check your cholesterol and give you tailored advice to further optimize your cardiovascular health.

The articles below confirm that exercise helps cardiovascular health:



*The many ways
exercise helps your heart*
- Harvard Health



*Cardiovascular
Effects and Benefits of
Exercise*
- PMC (nih.gov)

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