**#MovewithHeart and Celebrate American Heart Month**

If you’re looking for some easy ways to take better charge of your health this year, here’s one: get up and move. Not only does physical activity help improve your overall health, it protects your heart, too, according to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI). To make the point, and mark American Heart Month this February, NHLBI is launching a *#MoveWithHeart* campaign. Here are some facts—and some “get-moving” tips and resources—to inspire you to sit less and **move more**.

**Why move more everyday**

[Heart disease](https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/cad) is a leading cause of death among African Americans in the United States, but fortunately adding more physical activity to your daily routine can help your heart *and* improve your overall health. Think about it: **Being sedentary or inactive makes you nearly twice as likely to develop heart disease than if you’re active.**

Being active can:

* Strengthen your heart (even if you have heart disease)
* Improve blood flow
* Lower your blood pressure and cholesterol levels
* Give you more stamina and help you cope with stress
* Help you control your weight
* Help you quit smoking

Many types of activity can help your heart, whether it’s shooting hoops, taking an exercise class at your local recreation center, or walking during your lunchbreak. The bottom line for you and your family: Get up and get moving!

For more information about [the benefits of physical activity](https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-spanish/health-topics/temas/phys/benefits) visit the NHLBI website.

**How heart disease affects African Americans**

Almost 1 in 10 African Americans have some type of [heart disease](https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/coronary-heart-disease). And nearly 4 percent have had a stroke. High blood pressure is a major risk factor for both these conditions, and for African Americans, high blood pressure rates are especially high—about 61 percent of those aged 50 to 64, and 33 percent aged 35 to 49, have the condition.

Yet, even though physical activity can help lower blood pressure, less than half (only 44%) of African Americans meet national guidelines for the minimum amount of physical activity needed to stay healthy. But by moving more, you can help change those numbers. Just start gradually, and increase slowly.

**How much is enough?**

As little as 60 minutes a week of physical activity such as walking briskly helps your heart. For major health benefits, aim for at least 150 minutes (2½ hours) a week. Walk around your neighborhood or the track at a nearby school, or start a walking club after church.

If you want to get the same benefits in less time, try for 75 minutes of activities, such as playing a full game of basketball, jumping rope, or working out to a fun YouTube fitness video. It’s up to you how you reach your own personal targets. For example, 30 minutes of physical activity 5 times a week is one option if you’re aiming for 150 minutes a week.

Can’t carve out that much time at once? Don’t chuck your goal, chunk it! **Try 10 minutes a few times a day, for example.** You’ll know your workout counts if:

* Your heart is beating faster
* You’re breathing harder
* You break a sweat

Remember: more activity means a bigger boost to your health, so try to **stay active between workouts.** Here are some ideas:

* Take the stairs.
* Stand up when you change television channels.
* When you hear good music, don’t just sit there, dance!
* Stand up during meetings, or better yet, suggest a walking meeting.
* Park in the farthest space from your destination.
* Get off the bus one stop early.
* Play with your kids at the playground.

You can find [recommendations for children, older people, and pregnant women](https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-spanish/health-topics/temas/phys/recommendations) on NHLBI’s website as well as more [information about heart-healthy physical activity.](https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/phys/types)

Read [*The Heart Truth® for Women. The Heart Truth for African American Women: Take Action To Protect Your Heart*](https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/hearttruth/downloads/pdf/THT_AfricanAmerican_FS_2016_Update_Z_Fold_V5_508v2.pdf) on the NHLBI website.

**When to check with your doctor**

If you have a chronic health condition such as heart disease, arthritis, diabetes, or other symptoms, talk with your doctor first. [Learn more about risks of physical activity for certain groups](https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/phys/risks) on NHLBI’s website.

Getting regular physical activity can mean fewer doctor visits, hospitalizations, and medications. Choosing to **move more** whenever possible is one of the best choices you and your family can make.