

## 6 Ways to Get Creative with Your Cardio

Ever heard the saying that “a body at rest is likely to stay at rest?” Well the opposite is true, too. Get your body moving and you’re likely to stay moving, reaping a host of health benefits as well. Cardiovascular exercise, or “cardio,” is activity that uses the major muscle groups of your body and raises your heart rate for a sustained period of time.

### Why Cardio?

Cardio burns calories and helps you maintain a healthy body weight. It can also help lower your blood pressure; raise your HDL, or good, cholesterol levels; and reduce your risk for heart disease and heart attacks. Regular cardio activity is good for your mental health, too. It reduces your risk for depression, may help you sleep better and can keep your brain sharp as you age.

Aim for at least 2 1/2 hours per week of moderate-intensity physical activity (like walking briskly) or one hour and 15 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity (like jogging), or a mix of both. Think creatively and you can fit different types of cardio into your day. Try these tips:



**1. Get those steps.** Running errands? Park at the farthest end of the parking lot and add a couple of minutes of walking to your day.



### 4. Get up from that couch.

Do you spend most of your day sitting? Instead of sitting, walk in place or do a set of slow, controlled squats watching your favorite shows.



### 2. Grab some drumsticks.

Try a cardio drumming class. This class lets you drum to music. This workout will get your heart rate up and can be modified for any fitness level.



### 5. Walk and talk.

Meeting someone for coffee? Grab it to go and get a walk in. You’ll catch up while you sneak in a workout.



**3. Dance it off.** Try Zumba, a high-energy dance class. No time for class? Cue up your favorite music and take a five-minute dance break.



**6. Get wet.** Swimming is a fun way to move your body. Water exercise classes are a great option if you have joint or mobility issues, too.

If you’ve been inactive or are planning on upping your activity level, talk with your doctor about the amount and type of exercise that’s right for you.

Sources include National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; National Institutes of Health; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; U.S. Department of Agriculture and *Journal of Sports Science and Medicine*.