

# Being Active When You Have an Aneurysm

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Do you want to feel better, move better and sleep better? Experts now say that any physical activity counts toward better health – even just a few minutes!

Although we don't know for sure how physical activity affects aneurysms, we do know that it helps some of the major risk factors for aneurysms such as high blood pressure, obesity and inflammation.

Physical activity can:

- lower inflammation that might help slow the growth of an aneurysm
- improve the strength of your blood vessel walls
- lower your blood pressure
- help you maintain a healthy weight

## Getting Started

### Keep It Simple

Sit less and move around more! Walk to the mailbox. Walk the dog. Dance in the kitchen. Take the stairs. Find opportunities to move throughout your day. It all adds up.



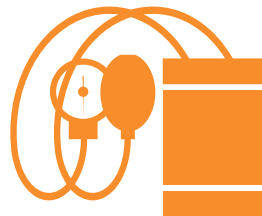
### Talk with Your Doctor

Talk with your health care provider before you start a new exercise program to discuss your concerns about becoming more active. Ask if a cardiac rehabilitation program would be helpful for you.



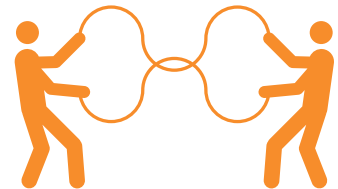
### Be Safe

Your blood pressure **MUST** be controlled before you begin an exercise program.



### Be Active with a Friend

Do activities you enjoy and find a buddy at home or work. Those who exercise with a friend tend to stick with it longer than those who go it alone.



## Aneurysm Tips and Cautions

Moderate-intensity activity is safe for people with aneurysms whose blood pressure is controlled. Check your blood pressure regularly and take your prescribed medications.

Avoid contact sports or competitive activities, especially if you have Marfan's syndrome.

Along with getting more active, talk with your doctor about ways to reduce your risk of an aneurysm getting worse, including stopping smoking and losing weight.

# Aerobic Activity



Aerobic activity increases your heart rate and breathing. Try to build up to doing 150 minutes/week of moderate-intensity activity (like a brisk walk, light cycling or water exercise). *Don't exercise at a high intensity.*

## What?

Any rhythmic, continuous activity



## How often?

3-5 days/week.



## How hard?

Fairly light to somewhat hard. You can carry on a conversation.



## How much?

20-60 minutes over the day



**Remember:** Fit in 5 or 10 minutes here and there. Or go for 20-30 minutes. Be active however and wherever you can. To lose weight, do twice as much activity.

## Aerobic Activity Cautions

- The type of aneurysm you have can affect how hard and often you should work out, so talk to your health care provider about specific guidelines for you.
- Do any drugs you're taking, like beta blockers, affect your response to exercise? Instead of checking heart rate, you may want to focus on your feelings of effort.

# Strength Training



Strength training, for example, working with weights or resistance bands, makes you stronger and helps your overall health. Plus, strength training can make daily activities like lifting laundry baskets or yardwork easier and safer.

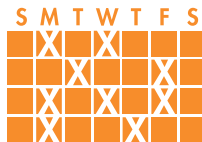
## What?

Hand weights, resistance bands, weight machines, or your own body (for example, kitchen counter push-ups or chair sit-to-stands).



## How often?

2-3 days/week  
\*Rest day in between



## How hard?

Start with light effort and build to medium effort.



## How much?

10-15 reps (for each major muscle group)  
Repeat 1-3 times.



**Remember:** If you need it, get help from a certified exercise professional. They can teach you the right way to do exercises and how to breathe properly.

## Strength Training Cautions

- Don't do high-intensity strength training.
- Avoid straining or holding your breath when lifting. This causes your blood pressure to go up.

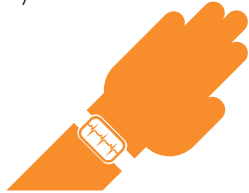
# Other Types of Physical Activity



Aerobic activity and strength training are at the heart of a program for those with an aneurysm. But you may enjoy and benefit from these other options.

## Take More Steps

Use a smart phone or activity tracker to measure your progress and stay motivated. Count your daily steps for the first week or two. Gradually build up to 7,000-9,000 steps/day.



## Tai Chi and Pilates

All promote balance, flexibility, and strength, and are relaxing too!



## Flexibility Exercises

Stretch large muscle groups for 10-30 seconds (30-60 seconds for older adults), 2-3 days/week. If you have Marfan's syndrome, avoid flexibility training like some yoga positions. They may cause joint dislocations or other injuries.



## Balance Training

Balance exercises may include standing on one foot, walking on a line or using a balance board. Be sure to train in an uncluttered area and use a chair or wall for support.



### To stay safe and injury free:

- Start with light to medium effort.
- Gradually increase your pace and time spent being active. Start low and go slow!
- Warm up and cool down at an easy pace before and after exercise.

## More Help

Go to [www.acsm.org/get-stay-certified/find-a-pro](http://www.acsm.org/get-stay-certified/find-a-pro) to find an **ACSM certified exercise professional** near you.

Start where you are. Use what you have. **Do what you can.**

How will I get started **this week?** \_\_\_\_\_

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