

Benefits of Exercise/Physical Activity

Cardiovascular Health Benefits

- Reduces the risk of developing and or dying from heart disease or stroke.
- Reduces blood pressure and your risk of developing high blood pressure.
- Reduces the risk of developing the metabolic syndrome (a combination of high blood pressure, high blood sugar, and low “good” cholesterol).
- Increases HDL (good) cholesterol, decreases triglycerides — an unhealthy type of fat in the blood.
- Reduces the risk of developing diabetes. Helps to control blood sugar in people with diabetes.
- Helps to maintain a healthy weight. Helps overweight people lose weight.
- Improves heart and lung function.
 - Increases the amount of blood pumped with every heart beat.
 - Increases oxygen delivery to the muscles.
 - Allows you to do more with less effort—increases energy level.

Other Benefits

- Improves your ability to play sports.
- Increases muscle strength.
- Improves flexibility and range of motion of joints.
- Improves balance and function in older adults.
- Reduces depression and anxiety.
- Relieves stress—is a good way to get rid of anger and frustration.
- Reduces the risk of some cancers (colon, breast, lung).
- Reduces the risk of developing osteopenia/osteoporosis (thinning of the bones which can lead to fractures).
- Improves sleep.

As you read through the list of exercise benefits, which ones might help you? Use the space below to list your top 3 reasons for being more active.

1	
2	
3	

Based on 2008 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. Available at <http://www.health.gov/paguidelines>
Accessed Jun. 7, 2009.

