# Shape It Up: Lower Blood Pressure in 30 Minutes a Day

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Renker Wellness Center members work out on the facility's state-of-the-art equipment.

With all that is known about hypertension these days, one would assume that those affected with the potentially fatal condition are taking the necessary steps to whip their blood pressures into shape. Unfortunately, this is not the case, even though hypertension contributes to 77 percent of all strokes and 67 percent of heart attacks in this nation.

Of the more than 65 million Americans diagnosed with hypertension, less than onethird are on adequate therapy, and 15 percent are on no therapy at all.What's even more shocking is that a whole 30 percent of those affected are completely unaware that they have hypertension — statistics that have led to a 40 percent increase over the past 10 years in the number of deaths associated with this condition.Risk Factors and Exercise

Hypertension is one of the several major risk factors for cardiovascular disease. Other risk factors include high blood lipid (fat) levels, smoking, obesity, diabetes, and a sedentary lifestyle. Evidence from scientific studies shows that reducing these risk factors reduces the chance of having a heart attack or stroke.The benefits of regular exercise include all of the following: Decrease in blood pressure Reduction of body weight Reduction of bad (LDL) and total cholesterol An increase in good (HDL) cholesterol An increase in exercise tolerance and function

Exercise plays a vital role in the lifestyle changes that are necessary in reducing hypertension. Other lifestyle changes are: removing stressors, stopping smoking, and diet changes. However, exercise is particularly significant for patients with hypertension who were previously sedentary. Modest increases in physical activity result in meaningful decreases in blood pressure. In addition, studies indicate that exercise can lead to decreases in both the systolic and diastolic pressures. Getting Started

When determining the appropriate amount of exercise (frequency, duration, and intensity) other considerations to cardiac risk factors should be calculated. Most people can derive significant benefits from integrating a half-hour of moderate activity into their day. If setting aside 30 minutes a day for exercise is not a reasonable approach, then integrating more physical functional activities may be the answer. For example, use the stairs rather than the elevators;walk at lunch as a group instead of sitting in the lunchroom; or walk short distances instead of driving. If the exercise program is established to address other existing risk factors beyond hypertension, then the duration, frequency, and intensity are adjusted accordingly. Frequently, most recommendations include 30 to 45 minutes of moderate intensity on a daily basis.As with any exercise program, always consult your physician for recommendations for exercise. Go From Sedentary to Moderately ActiveBeing an elite athlete or marathon runner is not required to derive significant benefits from getting started with an exercise program. Interestingly, studies show that less is gained when an individual goes from being moderately active to very active; rather, greater benefit is realized by those individuals who go from sedentary to moderately active. So get started. The benefits are many, but require a strong commitment to yourself, your family and your friends – for your life.

Renker Wellness Center Membership: $60 per month (includes full use of facilities and all classes) $75 initial evaluation fee Hours: Monday - Friday: 5:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. (closed 12 p.m. to 1 p.m.) Saturday: 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. Sunday: Closed For more information on exercise, the Renker Wellness Center, or finding a personal trainer, contact the Renker Wellness Center at 760-773-2030.

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