

Hypertension (high blood pressure)

Physical inactivity is directly responsible for 5-13% of high blood pressure ([FYSS 31](#))

A single exercise session leads to a reduction in blood pressure lasting up to one day. In order to maintain this reduction, physical activity needs to be a regular part of your life.

Prevention

Inactive individuals have a 30-50% greater risk of developing high blood pressure ([Whelton 2002](#))

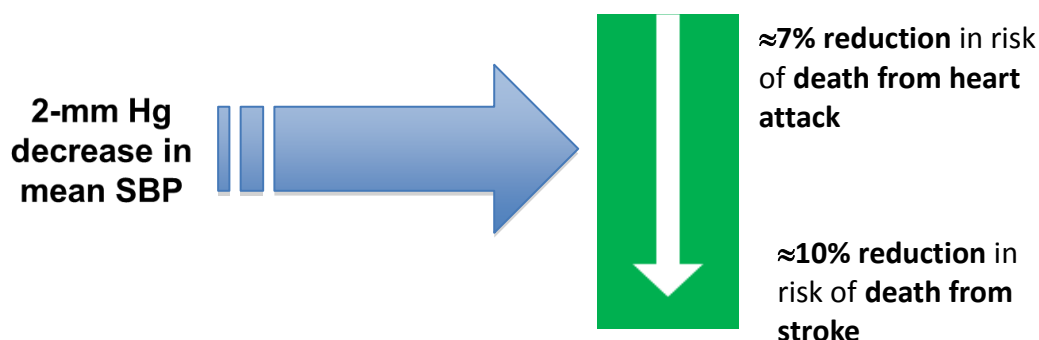
The more physical activity you do, and the fitter you are, the lower your risk of high blood pressure ([Chase 2009](#); [FYSS 31](#))

Treatment

Exercise and lifestyle change is the first line treatment for blood pressure and should be part of the treatment for everyone with high blood pressure ([NICE](#))

The average reduction in your blood pressure that can be expected with regular exercise is 3-10mmHg in systolic (the top number) and 2-6mmHg diastolic (the bottom number) ([Cornellissen 2013](#))

To put this into context a 2mmHg reduction in systolic blood pressure leads to a 7% reduction in death from heart disease and 10% reduction in death from stroke ([Lancet 2002](#))



Exercise can reduce your need to take medicines ([ASH/ISH 2014](#)) and even works if your blood pressure is very hard to control ([Dimeo 2012](#)).

Comparisons

Regular physical activity reduces your risk of death by three to four times more than common blood pressure medications including ACE-inhibitors, diuretics, Beta-blockers and calcium channel blockers ([Brooks 2012](#)).

Advice

If you are on blood pressure medication it is safe and desirable to exercise.

The best blood pressure medications to take if you are exercising regularly are ACE-inhibitors, with the next best being calcium channel blockers – discuss this with your doctor if you think you might need to change.

You should avoid exercise if your resting blood pressure is uncontrolled or greater than 180/100mmHg. In this case you should see your doctor to control your blood pressure better ([BACPR](#)).

Aerobic and resistance exercise reduce your blood pressure and so it is best to try and do both. However: ([ACSM](#); [BACPR](#); [FYSS](#))

- Avoid very strenuous resistance exercise such as lifting very heavy weights
- Be careful if doing exercises lying down – get up slowly you are at risk of fainting.

Further resources for Healthcare Professionals

[Motivate to Move – Cardiorespiratory Health](#)

[FYSS - Hypertension](#)