

Never Skip a Beat! The Importance of Good Cardiovascular Health



The heart is responsible for transporting oxygen and other important nutrients while removing carbon dioxide and other waste throughout our body.

Cardiovascular health is extremely crucial to everybody and disastrous outcome may arise if not taken care of. Factors influencing cardiovascular health:

- Blood pressure
- Cholesterol level
- Circulation

Did you know: Each minute, your blood pumps an amount of blood equivalent to 10 large-sized coffees.

So... How Do I Keep Good Cardiovascular Health?

1) Cutting down on Alcohol

While occasional drinking is fine, drinking for more than 3 alcoholic beverages a day can raise blood pressure and is harmful to the heart.

2) Quit Smoking

Nicotine constricts blood vessels and hinder blood flow causing blood pressure to rise.

3) Exercise regularly

30 minutes of aerobic exercise 3 to 4 times per week can help improve or maintaining a great cardiovascular health.

4) Maintain a healthy diet

Having too much sodium (salt) content as well as fatty fried foods can cause water retention and rise in cholesterol level respectively. For a better diet, include green leafy vegetables and lean meats. Replace fatty fried food with omega-3 rich food such as tuna and mackerel.

Additional Tip: Happiness and a strong sense of emotional vitality helps lower your risk of heart disease!

Simple stretches you can do!

Note: Hold each pose for 5 long and deep breaths or whatever feels good to your body.

Camel Pose

- Start by sitting on your heels in a kneeling position.
- Grab your right foot with your right hand and left foot with your left hand.
- Slowly squeeze your gluts and push your hips forward and upward as if someone were pulling your navel by a string.



- Keep holding your feet while you relax your shoulders so your arms hang free. Take your time to look backward and hold this position.

This pose strengthens your back, gluts, and hamstrings while opening your shoulders, chest, and core.

Twisting Lunge

- Come to a downward dog so that your hands and feet are on the floor with your hips forming the apex of a triangle.
- Step your right foot to the outside of your right hand and sink into a deep lunge. If possible, lower to your forearms for a deeper stretch.
- Open your chest while raising your right hand to the sky.
- This twisting motion should feel great on your spine and work well to open your chest. Repeat on your other side.



This move takes a bit of flexibility, but can be done with modifications until you are ready for the ultimate stretch.

Cross-Legged Opener

- Sit comfortably in a cross-legged position on the floor.
- Place your hands on your knees and pull towards your body, drawing your shoulders backward and downward while pushing your chest forward.



This isometric move will strengthen your back and open your chest, allowing for deeper breathing.

Cobra Pose

- Lie face down on your yoga mat or a comfortable surface.
- Position your hands next to your chest with your palms on the floor.
- Tuck your elbows in next to your body.
- Gaze forward and use your triceps and lower back to push your chest off the floor while keeping your lower body grounded. Push your arms only as straight as comfortable.
- Round your shoulders away from your ears. You'll feel this stretch in your chest and abdomen.



You'll feel the oxygen circulating in your blood and detoxifying your body. Notice your heart rate slow down and your worries slip away. With time, you'll feel less stressed, more alert, and energized.

While aerobic exercises such as running, skipping and swimming may not be too practical onboard, these stretches can serve as an alternative to help improve Cardiovascular health!

These stretches are perfect for waking you up, winding you down, or giving you a much-needed break. No matter when you choose to set aside a few minutes during your day, your heart will thank you. ■