

MARK'S CORNER



The Best Exercises to Lower Cholesterol

An activity plan and healthy lifestyle can help lower your cholesterol levels significantly. Regular exercise is one of the best things you can do to lower your "bad" (LDL) cholesterol, raise your "good" (HDL) cholesterol, and reduce your risk of heart disease.

While both aerobic exercise and strength-training exercises have been found to have benefits on cardiovascular health, studies suggest that a combination is ideal. Some of the best exercise for lowering cholesterol naturally include:



Walking, Jogging, or Running

Running, jogging, and running are great exercises to lower cholesterol and triglycerides. Aim to spend at least 150 minutes per week walking, jogging, or running with moderate intensity to see results.

Which one you choose will depend on your stamina and your joint health, but all are beneficial.



Cycling

Cycling expends about the same energy as jogging, but it's easier on your joints. If you experience joint pain, it may be best to choose cycling over running. You can hit local trails or try a stationary exercise bike to lower cholesterol.



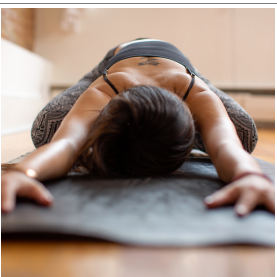
Swimming and Water Exercises

Lifting weights or doing other resistance exercises—for example using resistance bands or even your own body weight—is helpful on its own, and especially as part of an exercise program that includes aerobic exercise as well.



Resistance Training

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Yoga

While yoga is generally a low-intensity exercise, studies have shown that it may reduce the risk of heart disease and may positively affect cholesterol levels. The fastest way to lower your cholesterol without medication is to exercise consistently with combined aerobic training and strength training and adopt a low-cholesterol diet.



How Much to Exercise to Lower Cholesterol

How much and how often you exercise is important. According to the American Heart Association, you should aim for 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity, or 75 minutes per week of vigorous aerobic activity; or a combination of both, preferably spread throughout the week.¹⁰

You'll gain even more benefits by being active at least 300 minutes (five hours) per week. Add moderate- to high-intensity muscle strengthening activity at least two days per week.



How Long Does it take to lower cholesterol?

Some studies show that a significant improvement in cholesterol can occur within six months of consistent aerobic exercise combined with strength training. However, you will need to adopt a low-cholesterol diet as well.



Getting Started

If you've been leading a sedentary lifestyle and/or are overweight, you should contact your healthcare professional to help you create an exercise program that progressively works up to a caloric energy expenditure of about 1,000 calories per week.

Always consult with your doctor before starting an exercise plan and or to develop your health care plan.