



## How exercise makes your heart healthy

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**Washington :** Exercise plays an important role in making our heart stronger by improving blood flow and decreasing its workload, researchers say.

According to Joseph Libonati, PhD, associate professor of nursing at Penn Nursing, exercise improves the ratio between the heart's demand for oxygen and its supply through the coronary arteries.

With exercise, the heart gets stronger because it gets bigger and is able to pump more efficiently.

Exercise allows your heart to push out a greater volume of blood with every beat and it does so at a lower heart rate. It also improves the blood flow to the heart by improving the heart's ability to have its coronary blood vessels dilate. These changes in parallel improve both the supply and demand of the heart.

Exercise helps lower high blood pressure by improving the ability of your blood vessels to dilate, making the pressure on those vessels less.

Exercise also improves your blood sugar levels and makes you leaner; this allows your heart to pump blood at lower pressures, thereby making your heart work less.

Using large muscle mass repetitively is best for heart health. The general recipe for exercise toward a healthy heart is FIT: (Frequency Intensity Time).

**For frequency:** You should exercise five days a week. Find something you like so you are more likely to stick with it.

**For intensity:** You should do the talk test. If you can hold a normal conversation with little breathing trouble while exercising, this is the right intensity.

**For time:** You should exercise 30 to 60 minutes per day, and it doesn't have to be all at once. The important factor is that you do as much physical activity as you can throughout the day.