

How Does Exercise Affect Blood Pressure?

Blood pressure can rise after exercise, and this is typically temporary. However, extreme spikes or drops in blood pressure can be a sign of a medical condition such as hypertension.

Your blood pressure should gradually return to normal after you finish exercising. The quicker your blood pressure returns to its resting level, the healthier you probably are. According to guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “normal” blood pressure is less than 120/80 mm Hg. This includes a systolic pressure reading under 120 mm Hg (the top number) and a diastolic pressure reading (the bottom number) under 80 mm Hg.

Exercise increases systolic blood pressure. Systolic blood pressure measures blood vessel pressure when your heart beats. Diastolic blood pressure measures the pressure in the blood vessels between heartbeats. It shouldn't change significantly during exercise. If it does, consult your doctor.

It's difficult to say conclusively what blood pressure readings are considered healthy after exercise, as blood pressure varies from person to person. Normal levels for one person might be a sign of a problem for another person.

In general, though, high blood pressure after a resting period of up to two hours following exercise includes any reading greater than 140/90 mm Hg. Low blood pressure after exercise includes any reading lower than 90/60 mm Hg.

Effects of exercise on blood pressure

Aerobic activities such as swimming, cycling, and running put additional demands on your cardiovascular system. Your muscles need more oxygen than they do when you're at rest, so you have to breathe more quickly.

Your heart starts to pump harder and faster to circulate blood to deliver oxygen to your muscles. As a result, systolic blood pressure rises. It's normal for systolic blood pressure to rise to between 160 and 220 mm Hg during exercise. **Unless you've cleared it with your doctor, stop exercising if your systolic blood pressure surpasses 200 mm Hg. Beyond 220 mm Hg, your risk of a heart problem increases.**

Different factors can influence how your cardiovascular system responds to exercise. **Some of these factors include diet, medical conditions, and medications.**

For instance, **exercise hypertension** is a condition that causes an extreme spike in blood pressure during physical activity. People with exercise hypertension can experience spikes in systolic blood pressure up to 250 mm Hg during exercise.

In general, your blood pressure should return to normal within several hours of a workout. Even then, you might notice that your blood pressure doesn't return to exactly what it was before exercise. That's because it's normal for blood pressure to drop slightly within a few hours of exercise.

Resource: <https://www.healthline.com/health/blood-pressure-after-exercise>