

## HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

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"Meditation helps calm the body and mind bringing them into a better state of balance."



**Q: I HAVE HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE FOR WHICH I AM ON MEDICATIONS. PLEASE SUGGEST LIFESTYLE CHANGES TO CONTROL MY BP. WHAT PRECAUTIONS SHOULD I KEEP IN MIND WHILE EXERCISING?**

**A:** High blood pressure causes the heart to work too hard. It increases the risk of heart disease and stroke. It can damage the eyes, kidneys, liver and the nervous system. Although genes play a role in the occurrence of hypertension, lifestyle habits play a crucial part in controlling this condition.

### Tips to control blood pressure

#### Regular exercise is a great shield

Physical activity is one of the most important steps for controlling high blood pressure. Regular, low to moderate impact exercise can reduce both systolic and diastolic blood pressure by an average of 10mm Hg.

#### Cardiovascular exercise

Cardiovascular exercises should be performed 4 to 6 days a week, for a duration of 30 to 60 minutes. Begin the exercise session with a **gradual warm-up lasting for 10 minutes.**

Examples of cardiovascular exercises:

- Walking
- Bicycling

- Rowing
- Swimming
- Golf (walking the course)
- Low-moderate impact aerobics

Mix spices such as fennel, basil, oregano, black pepper. Use them to enhance flavour of your food. They have active ingredients that can reduce blood pressure and can be used as a salt substitute.

#### Strength training exercises

Strength training exercises should be safely designed with the help of a fitness professional. Heavy resistance weight training exercises are not recommended as they can elevate blood pressure; you can do weight-training exercises using light resistance.

A word of caution: Always check with your physician for specific guidelines

based on your medical history before starting any form of physical exercise.

#### Relaxation exercises

Deep breathing

Simple deep breathing exercises and pranayama decrease stress and can lower blood pressure.

#### 2 simple breathing exercises you can do:

##### 1. Simple deep breathing

Do slow and deep inhalations and exhalations.

Benefits

- Improves concentration
- Increases lung capacity
- Calms the mind

##### 2. Diaphragm breathing

Inhale, and feel the stomach expand, exhale, and the feel stomach sink down.

Benefits

- Strengthens the diaphragm.
- Helps conditions such as anxiety and slows down the respiration rate.

#### Massage

Try going for a massage once a fortnight or month. It will help release muscular tension and relax your body.



## Meditation

Meditation helps calm the body and mind bringing them into a better state of balance.

## Restful sleep

Rest allows the pulse to slow down and relaxes the body. A good night's sleep reduces overall fatigue, anxiety and stress.

## Watch your salt intake!

Most of us consume more salt than we need. Limit salt intake to 2,400 milligrams per day (1-teaspoon). The low sodium diets not only help to keep blood pressure from rising, but also help blood pressure medicines to work better.

When you eat too much salt, the body retains water to "wash" the salt from the body. This can result in high blood pressure.

## Common foods are high in sodium

- Processed and packaged foods such as canned soup, ketchup, pickles, and soy sauce.
- Salted crackers, popcorn, chips and peanuts.

## The herbal salt substitute

Mix spices such as fennel, basil, oregano, black pepper. Use them to enhance flavour of your food. They have active ingredients that can reduce blood pressure and can be used as a salt substitute.

## Take charge now!


- Maintain a healthy weight; lose weight if you are overweight.
- If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation.
- Avoid too much caffeine. Several cups of coffee can mildly increase blood pressure throughout the day.
- Quit smoking.


**Namita Jain**, MD Kishco Ltd. has been actively involved in the wellness space for over 25 years. She is qualified from the American College of Sports Medicine, the American Council of Exercise, the Aerobic and Fitness Association of America, the Reebok and the Pilates UK institute. She has authored over 10 best-selling health and wellness books.

In the field of rehabilitation, she offers consultations at Bombay Hospital. This column addresses concerns faced by many and her insights for facing the challenge. Learn the powers and perils of lifestyle changes through this Q & A column.

For information and registration on specialized workshops conducted by Namita Jain, contact prism healing institute at - [prisimmbs@gmail.com](mailto:prisimmbs@gmail.com).









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