Suffering from high blood pressure? Exercise could be the key!

Hypertension or high blood pressure (high BP) is a very common condition, affecting up to one third of Australians over 18! High blood pressure places strain on the heart and circulatory system and is a primary risk factor for development of heart disease. The good news is that much can be done to reduce blood pressure and decrease the risk of serious cardiovascular events like heart attack and stroke.



Medication can be very effective in lowering blood pressure and is often the primary focus of treatment. Importantly, there are a number of lifestyle factors such as diet and exercise, which have significant positive effects on high blood pressure. High blood pressure is most likely to develop in people who are inactive, and exercise is a cheap, safe method of significantly reducing blood pressure.

Cardiovascular or Resistance Training?

Various forms of exercise have been shown to be safe and beneficial for treatment and prevention of high BP. **Aerobic exercise such as walking, cycling and swimming, at low to moderate intensity, has been shown to have a dose dependent relationship with reductions in blood pressure**. It is important to gradually build up your levels of exercise and to make these activities long term habit.

Resistance or weight training has been shown to have smaller but significant effects in lowering BP. Of note, resistance training may also have additional indirect benefits with improved strength allowing you to safely increase your exercise loads and your capacity to perform aerobic training.

E: admin@ibphysio.com.au | T: 02 9976 3540 | F: 02 9976 3290 | Suite 14, Level 2, 22 Darley Road, Manly, NSW 2095 Australia



Isometric Wall Squat

There is some exciting new evidence behind **isometric exercise.** Isometric exercises involve muscle contractions but no movement. These exercises can be as simple as squeezing a ball in your hand or performing the popular isometric wall squat. The dose of isometric loading required to gain improvements in blood pressure are as short as 4 x 2 minute contractions, three times per week, that's less than 30 minutes in a week!

High intensity Interval Training or HIIT, is performing exercise at 85-95% of heart rate max, with periods of low intensity or no exercise rest between intervals. A recent systematic review showed that HIIT resulted in significant reductions in BP and increases in cardio-respiratory fitness. One of the big benefits of this form of training is the ability to achieve significant results with often quite short sessions compared to other forms of exercise which is more appealing for some.

Exercise Physiology

The positive effects of exercise on cardiovascular, musculoskeletal and even psychological conditions is well documented. In structuring an appropriate exercise program, medical history, previous levels of activity, previous injury and personal goals all need to be taken into account. An experienced Exercise Physiologist is best placed to take all of these factors into account and to work with you to create a plan to make positive lifestyle changes and reach your health goals!

E: admin@ibphysio.com.au | T: 02 9976 3540 | F: 02 9976 3290 | Suite 14, Level 2, 22 Darley Road, Manly, NSW 2095 Australia



If you are suffering from high blood pressure or just looking for help in reaching your health and fitness goals, speak to one of our highly qualified exercise physiologists today and get on your way to better health!

Article by Sam Ross.

E: admin@ibphysio.com.au | T: 02 9976 3540 | F: 02 9976 3290 | Suite 14, Level 2, 22 Darley Road, Manly, NSW 2095 Australia