

Strength Training in Hypertension

Many people with hypertension avoid strength training because they are afraid that it will increase their blood pressure. But research shows that these fears are generally unfounded.

It's true that if you have high blood pressure, you should avoid *strenuous* strength-related activities, such as trying to open a sticking window or attempting to move a stalled car. Activities of this type, including [isometric](#) strength training, may cause excessively high blood pressure responses and are potentially dangerous for many people with hypertension. Other than that, you are encouraged to follow a sensible strength training routine.

Sensible strength training is characterized by:

- Lifting lighter weights for a higher number of reps. (A good weight is one that you can lift for 12-15 repetitions in good form.)
- Moving continuously throughout each exercise (to avoid an isometric hold)
- Breathing throughout each exercise (typically exhaling as you exert effort or lift the weight and inhaling as you return to the starting position)
- NOT lifting maximum weights, performing isometric contractions, or holding your breath. (These practices result in excessive blood pressure responses and should be avoided.)

Strength training is not recommended as the **only** form of exercise for people with hypertension because it has not consistently been shown to help lower blood pressure. Thus, it is recommended as just one component of a well-rounded fitness program that also includes aerobic exercise (cardio) and flexibility training.

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