

### Week 4 Challenge: Increase Your Activity Level

It's time to get moving! Increasing your physical activity will improve your health. Exercising more often offers many health benefits. Exercising five times a week can:

- Decrease blood pressure
- Decrease cholesterol
- Improve your heart and lungs
- Increase endurance
- Help you keep a healthy body weight
- Strengthen your heart

This week you will learn about heart rates, set physical activity goals, add exercise to your routine, begin strength training exercises, and add healthy habits to everyday activities – like doing simple exercises while waiting for your coffee to brew. You will be surprised how easy it is to increase your daily activity level without even going to the gym. We have lots of tips that don't cost a thing and you will actually enjoy. So, let's get moving!

#### Use These Resources to Complete Your Action Items:

- *Heart Rates*
- *Physical Activity Goal*
- *Physical Activity Log*
- *Strength Training Exercises*
- *Exercise While Watching TV*
- *Burn Calories By Doing Housework!*

#### Your Action Items This Week

- Determine your resting heart rate and target heart rate.
- Plan your physical activity (what you will do, where you will do it and when you will do it) and put it on your calendar.
- Do at least 10 minutes of cardio physical activity at the intensity to reach your target heart rate. If you are more physically fit, try to do 30 minutes. Do this at least five days during the week.
- Do at least 4 strength training exercises. If you are more physically fit, try to do 10 strength training exercises. Do these 2 days each week.
- Calculate your post-workout heart rate every time you exercise.

- ❑ Check out the Physical Activity Log in your workbook (page 16). It may be helpful to write down what you do.

**In your workbook, use the Week 4 Challenge Tracker to track your progress.**

*Step up to the Challenge and say, "I Can!"*

## Heart Rates

You can exercise at different levels. Think of the last time you took a walk. Now think of the last time you ran up a flight of stairs. How did you feel? You may have noticed your heart beating faster when you ran up a flight of stairs. The number of times your heart beats every minute is called your heart rate. Knowing your heart rate will help you know at what level you should exercise. For some people walking will raise their heart rate to a good level for daily exercise. For other people walking might not raise their heart rate high enough. Usually you want to exercise at a level that your heart rate is higher than normal, but you can still carry on a conversation.

### Measuring Your Heart Rate

Measuring your heart rate is a great way to make sure you are working out at the right level. A simple equation can help you find your “Target Heart Rate” zone.

1. First, calculate your **resting heart rate**. Your resting heart rate is the number of times your heart beats per minute before you begin your workout. This can be done in two ways:



Place the index and middle finger of your right hand on the left side of your left wrist. Apply mild pressure until you find a beat.

OR

Place the index and middle finger of your right hand to the right of the Adam's apple area. Apply pressure until you find a beat.



*\*Caffeine, sleeping patterns, and stress may change your heart rate reading. Try to take your pulse first thing in the morning on a day you have gotten plenty of rest.*

2. Next you need to calculate your **target heart rate**. This is the number of times your heart should be beating per minute while you are exercising.

There are two ways you can do this. You can use Internet sources, which calculate your target heart rate for you, or do a simple equation without the Internet.

**Here are a couple Internet target heart rate calculators:**

<http://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/healthtool-target-heart-rate-calculator>

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/target-heart-rate/SM00083>

**Calculating your target heart rate yourself:**

Step 1: Take 220 minus your age.

Step 2: Multiply this number by the desired percentage  
(usually between 70-85%).

Step 3: This is your target heart rate!



Check your pulse right after your workout to ensure that you are working out at the right intensity, or somewhere in the 70 to 85% range.

As you get into better shape and increase your physical activity, your resting heart rate should decrease a small amount. Hopefully by the end of the 12-week Challenge you will be able to meet this goal of decreasing your resting heart rate.

## Physical Activity Goal

Now that you have calculated the intensity you should be working at, focus on the amount of time you should devote to exercise.

### Cardio

Aim to do a cardio workout 30 minutes a day for 5 days a week. If you don't have time for a full 30 minute workout, you could split the 30 minutes into three 10 minute workout sessions during the day. Here are some ideas to increase your activity level without having to go to the gym:

- Walk instead of drive.
- Don't park in the closest parking spot. Park farther from where you are going and walk the rest of the distance.
- Get off the bus a stop away from your normal stop.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Play with your children or pets.
- Dance to music.
- Garden.
- Choose an activity you enjoy. (Examples: walking the dog, doing yoga, biking, or doing aerobics in the pool)
- Find activities you can do with your family and pets. Take a hike, ride a bike, go ice skating or sign up and train for a heart walk. Check out our Physical Activities page in the Resource section for other ideas.



Also, it may be easier to fit exercising in by making it an “appointment” on your calendar. Planning time for exercise during the week will help you make it a priority.

Try getting a workout partner. This could be your spouse, kids, a friend, or another family member. Usually people who work out together motivate each other to avoid skipping activities.

Other suggested exercises:

- Walking
- Jogging
- Pilates
- Rollerblading
- Dance Videos
- Ice Skating
- Kick Boxing
- Stair Climbing
- Rock Climbing
- Swimming
- Soccer
- Karate
- Skiing
- Elliptical
- Spinning
- Jumping Rope
- Jumping Jacks
- Hopscotch
- Rowing

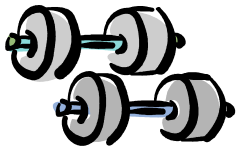


## Strength Training

Strength training is an important part of your workout. You should do strength training in addition to the cardio exercises listed above.

Benefits of strength training include:

- Strong tendons and ligaments to protect you from injuries.
- Increased muscle. Muscle burns more calories than fat. If you strength train you will burn more calories all the time than if you only did cardio.
- Strong muscles are healthy for your heart. Muscles that are stronger use less oxygen and your heart will not have to work as hard when you are active.



The American Heart Association recommends you do 8 to 10 different strength training exercises at least two days a week. Each exercise should target a different muscle or muscle group.

You can strength train by using free weights either at home or in a gym. There are many creative ways to do strength training without going to a gym. Here are some examples:

- Do bicep curls using heavy cans of soup while you wait for your coffee to brew in the morning.
- Try doing exercises using the weight of your body. For example, a push up is a great way to work your biceps, triceps, pectoral muscles, and abdominals all at the same time.
- Abdominal crunches are a great way to work out your core muscles. These can also be done while watching TV or before bedtime.

# Strength Training Exercises

## Squats

A great exercise for strengthening hips, thighs, and buttocks. Before long, you'll find that walking, jogging, and climbing stairs are a snap!

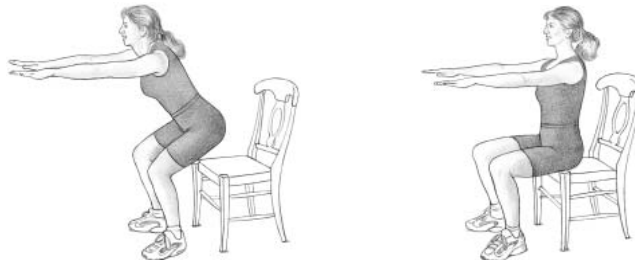
1. In front of a sturdy, armless chair, stand with feet slightly more than shoulder-width apart. Extend your arms out so they are parallel to the ground and lean forward a little at the hips.
2. Making sure that your knees NEVER come forward past your toes, lower yourself in a slow, controlled motion, to a count of four, until you reach a near-sitting position.
3. Pause. Then, to a count of two, slowly rise back up to a standing position. Keep your knees over your ankles and your back straight.
4. Repeat 10 times for one set. Rest for one to two minutes. Then complete a second set of 10 repetitions.

*Note 1:* If this exercise is too difficult, start off by using your hands for assistance. If you are unable to go all the way down, place a couple of pillows on the chair or only squat down four to six inches.

*Note 2:* Placing your weight more on your heels than on the balls or toes of your feet can help keep your knees from moving forward past your toes. It will also help to use the muscles of your hips more during the rise to a standing position.

### Make sure you:

- Don't sit down too quickly.
- Don't lean your weight too far forward or onto your toes when standing up.



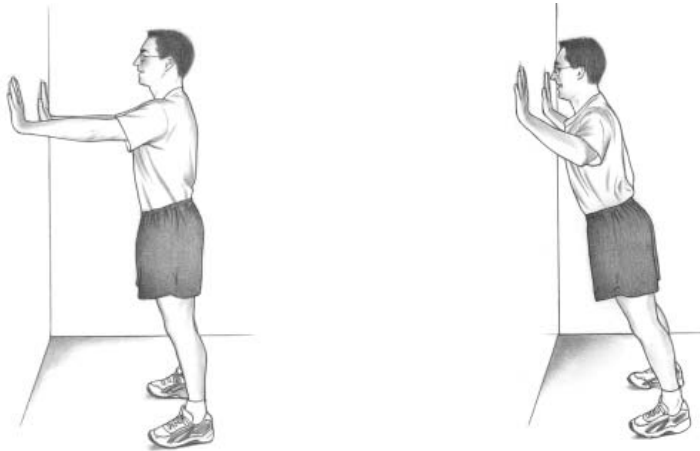
## Wall Push-ups

This exercise is a modified version of the push-up you may have done years ago in physical education classes. It is less challenging than a classic push-up and won't require you to get down on the floor—but it will help to strengthen your arms, shoulders, and chest.

1. Find a wall that is clear of any objects—wall hangings, windows, etc. Stand a little farther than arm's length from the wall.
2. Facing the wall, lean your body forward and place your palms flat against the wall at about shoulder height and shoulder-width apart.
3. To a count of four, bend your elbows as you lower your upper body toward the wall in a slow, controlled motion, keeping your feet planted.
4. Pause. Then, to a count of two, slowly push yourself back until your arms are straight—but don't lock your elbows.
5. Repeat 10 times for one set. Rest for one to two minutes. Then complete a second set of 10 repetitions.

### Make sure you:

- Don't round or arch your back.



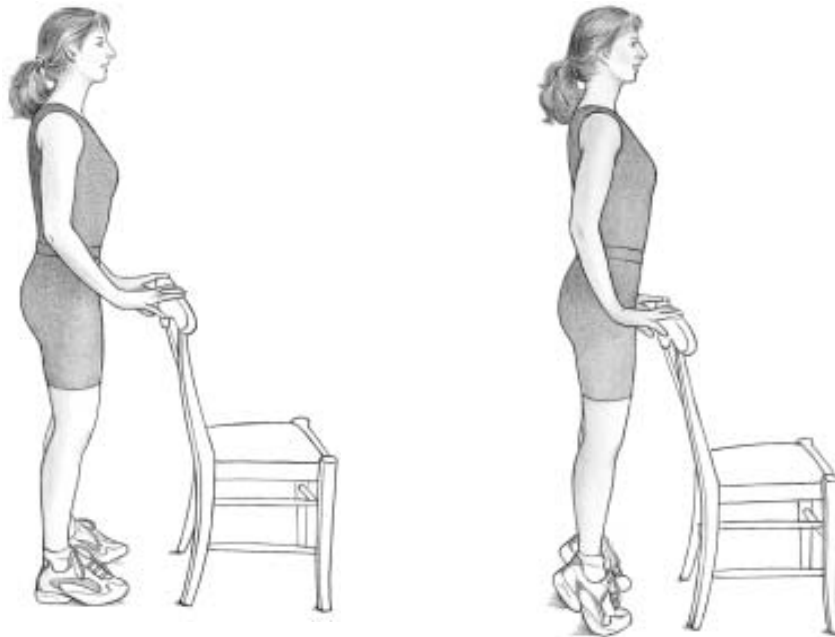
## Toe Stands

If a walk in the park no longer seems easy or enjoyable, the "toe stand" exercise is for you! These are a good way to strengthen your calves and ankles and restore stability and balance, it will help make that stroll in the park fun and relaxing.

1. Near a counter or sturdy chair, stand with feet shoulder-width apart. Use the chair or counter for balance.
2. To a count of four, slowly push up as far as you can, onto the balls of your feet and hold for two to four seconds.
3. Then, to a count of four, slowly lower your heels back to the floor.
4. Repeat 10 times for one set. Rest for one to two minutes. Then complete a second set of 10 repetitions.

### Make sure you:

- Don't lean on the counter or chair—use them for balance only.
- Breathe regularly throughout the exercise.



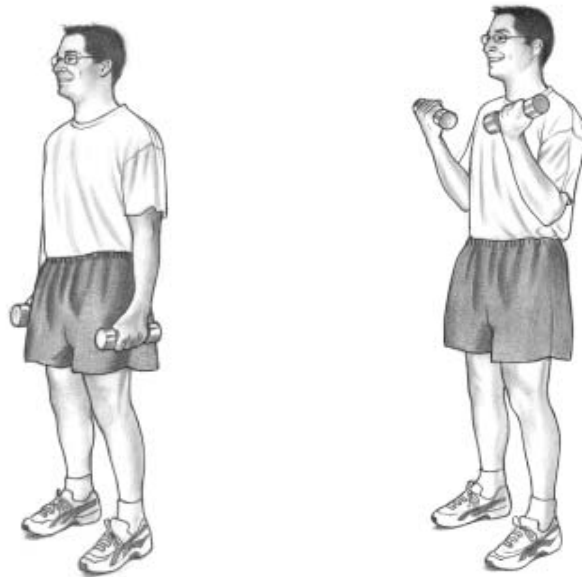
## Bicep Curls

Does a gallon of milk feel a lot heavier than it used to? After a few weeks of doing the bicep curl, lifting that eight-pound jug will seem a cinch!

1. With a dumbbell in each hand stand, or sit in an armless chair, with feet shoulder-width apart, arms at your sides, and palms facing your thighs.
2. To a count of two, slowly lift up the weights so that your forearms rotate and palms face in toward your shoulders, while keeping your upper arms and elbows close to your side—as if you had a newspaper tucked beneath your arm. Keep your wrists straight and dumbbells parallel to the floor.
3. Pause. Then, to a count of four, slowly lower the dumbbells back toward your thighs, rotating your forearms so that your arms are again at your sides, with palms facing your thighs.
4. Repeat 10 times for one set. Rest for one to two minutes. Then complete a second set of 10 repetitions.

### Make sure you:

- Don't let your elbows move away from the sides of your body.
- Keep your wrists straight.



## Step-Ups

This is a great strengthening exercise that requires only a set of stairs. But don't let its simplicity fool you. Step-ups will improve your balance and build strength in your legs, hips, and buttocks.

1. Stand alongside the handrail at the bottom of a staircase. With your feet flat and toes facing forward, put your right foot on the first step.
2. Holding the handrail for balance, to a count of two, straighten your right leg to lift up your left leg slowly until it reaches the first step. As you're lifting yourself up, make sure that your right knee stays straight and does not move forward past your ankle. Let your left foot tap the first step near your right foot.
3. Pause. Then, using your right leg to support your weight, to a count of four, slowly lower your left foot back to the floor.
4. Repeat 10 times with the right leg and 10 times with the left leg for one set. Rest for one to two minutes. Then complete a second set of 10 repetitions with each leg.

### Make sure you:

- Don't let your back leg do the work.
- Don't let momentum do the work.
- Press your weight through the heel rather than ball or toes of your front leg as you lift.



## Knee Extension

By targeting the quadriceps muscle in the front of the thigh (which play a primary role in bending and straightening the leg), this exercise strengthens weak knees and reduces the symptoms of arthritis of the knee. It is important to do this exercise in conjunction with the "knee curl," as the muscles targeted in these two exercises—the front thigh muscles and the hamstrings—work together when you walk, stand, and climb.

1. Put on your ankle weights.
2. In a sturdy, armless chair, sit all the way back, so that your feet barely touch the ground; this will allow for easier movement throughout the exercise. If your chair is too low, add a rolled-up towel under your knees. Your feet should be shoulder-width apart, and your arms should rest at your sides or on your thighs.
3. With your toes pointing forward and your foot flexed, to a count of two slowly lift your right leg, extending your leg until your knee is straight.
4. Pause. Then, to a count of four, slowly lower your foot back to the ground.
5. Repeat 10 times with the right leg and 10 times with the left leg for one set. Rest for a minute or two. Then complete a second set of 10 repetitions with each leg.

### Make sure you:

- Keep your ankle flexed throughout the move.



## Pelvic Tilt

This exercise improves posture and tightens the muscles in your abdomen and buttocks. Do this exercise in conjunction with the floor back extension to strengthen your midsection. (You should not have the ankle weights on during this exercise.)

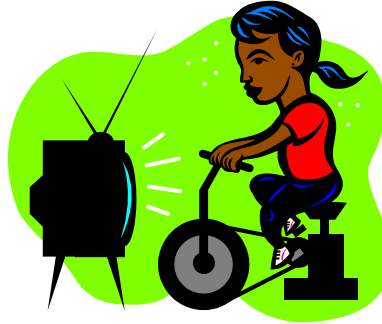
1. On the floor or on a firm mattress, lie flat on your back with your knees bent, feet flat, and arms at your sides, palms facing the ground.
2. To a count of two, slowly roll your pelvis so that your hips and lower back are off the floor, while your upper back and shoulders remain in place.
3. Pause. Then, to a count of four, slowly lower your pelvis all the way down.
4. Repeat 10 times for one set. Rest for a minute or two. Then complete a second set of 10 repetitions.

### Make sure you:

- Breathe throughout the exercise.
- Don't lift your upper back or shoulders off the ground.



## Exercise While Watching TV



Some days are harder than others, and working out may not be at the top of your list. Instead of skipping it, entertain yourself while you do it. Watch television while you work out! In addition to the strength training exercises mentioned earlier, here are exercises you can do to make TV “downtime” a more healthy use of your time.

- Abdominal crunches
- Leg lifts
- Walking, jogging, or running on a tread mill
- Use a stationary bike
- Stretches
- Use a resistance band (leg lifts, bicep curls, triceps)
- Jumping Jacks
- Jogging in place

## Burn Calories By Doing House Work!

You can even burn calories by doing some errands around the house!

### Calories Burned Per Half Hour

Doing laundry 73

Making the bed 68

Cooking 85

Washing the dishes 78

Ironing 78

Dusting 85

Sweeping 112

Vacuuming 119

Scrubbing the floor 129

Rearranging furniture 204

Yard work 170

Washing windows 102

Gardening 136

Mowing the lawn 187

Raking 146

Shoveling snow 204

