

Even easy exercise may lower blood pressure in those with diabetes

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Study found just a few minutes of resistance training or walking helped.

(HealthDay)—Just a few minutes of easy exercise daily can help lower blood pressure in overweight and obese people with type 2 diabetes, researchers report.

"It appears you don't have to do very much," co-author Bronwyn Kingwell, head of metabolic and vascular physiology at the Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes in Melbourne, Australia, said in an American Heart Association news release.

"We saw some marked blood pressure reductions over trial days when people did the equivalent of walking to the water cooler or some simple body-weight movements on the spot," she noted.

For the study, the researchers monitored blood pressure levels in 24

overweight and obese adults as they sat for eight hours. The average age of the study participant was 62. All had type 2 diabetes.

The study participants took brief breaks from sitting, and either walked slowly for three minutes or did three minutes of simple resistance exercises every half hour. Again, their blood pressure was monitored.

The [resistance exercises](#) included activities such as half-squats, calf raises, knee raises, or gluteal muscle squeezes.

Compared to uninterrupted sitting, light walking led to an average 10-point drop in [systolic blood pressure](#) (the top number in a blood pressure reading). Simple resistance exercise led to an average 12-point decrease in systolic [blood pressure](#), the study reported.

"Light activity breaks are not meant to replace regular, purposeful exercise. But they may be a practical solution to cut down on sitting time, especially if you're at your desk all day," Kingwell said.

The study was to be presented Monday at the American Heart Association's annual meeting in Orlando, Fla. Until published in a peer-reviewed journal, findings presented at meetings are usually considered preliminary.

More information: The U.S. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute offers a [guide to physical activity](#).

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