

Five great cardio workouts you can do at home

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You might have heard that doing cardio, or aerobic, exercise is one of

the best ways to keep your heart, lungs and cardiovascular system healthy and strong.

Yet finding the time for the gym or even a trip to the local park can be a challenge when work and home responsibilities start to add up.

The good news? There's a growing list of exercises that are now considered to be "good cardio." The better news? A number of these are at-home cardio workouts that you can do in the comfort of your living space.

According to the [U.S. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute](#) (NHLBI), adding in more "everyday" activities is a great way to get some moderate-intensity workouts.

[Dr. Ben Levine](#), a cardiologist at UT Southwestern Medical Center, agrees. In a recent [blog](#) post, he said, "My patients often ask me, 'What's the best type of exercise for [heart](#) health?' Here's what I tell them: I don't care what type of exercise you do as long as you do something!"

The [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) states that to ensure you're getting all the benefits of cardio exercise, your target heart rate should be 64%-76% of your maximum heart rate for moderate-intensity [physical activity](#) and 77%-93% for [vigorous physical activity](#).

Here are five cardio workouts at home that can help you meet those guidelines, plus they're affordable, require no [travel time](#) and might even help you check a few items off your weekly "to-do" chores list.

1. Jumping rope

According to the NHLBI, jumping rope for just 15 minutes is considered a moderate-intensity workout.

One recent study of college-aged males published in the [*Research Journal of Pharmacy and Technology*](#) found that the group who jumped rope twice daily for 12 weeks had better rates of oxygen absorption by volume (known as VO₂ max score) than the control group who engaged in their normal activities. This higher score indicates an improvement in fitness and health levels, especially heart and lung health, according to the [Cleveland Clinic](#).

2. Climbing stairs

If you've got stairs leading to your apartment or inside your home, you're in luck. Carrying heavy loads of groceries or other packages up the stairs could be considered a vigorous workout, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). It recommends 75-150 minutes of this type of workout or 150-300 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week in its publication, [*Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*](#).

"Moving more and sitting less have tremendous benefits for everyone," then HHS Secretary [Alex M. Azar](#) said in the introduction to the guidelines.

3. Cardio yoga

While not all forms of yoga will give you an aerobic workout, the HHS states in its [*Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*](#) that the more intense forms like power and Vinyasa yoga are considered moderate-intensity activities.

Yoga also strengthens muscles, and, according to one study published recently in the [*Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care*](#). In fact, it was significantly more effective than both traditional aerobic exercise

and Zumba dance classes at lowering blood pressure.

The bottom line? "A regular exercise routine will help you keep your heart healthy for years to come. Jog, swim, golf, hike, play basketball, dance, do yoga—whatever you love to do," said Levine.

4. Cleaning the house

Few people look forward to housecleaning, but if you apply the right kind of elbow grease, it just might double as your cardio workout. According to the [NHLBI](#), washing the windows or floors for 45-60 minutes provides a moderate level of aerobic exercise.

What's more, a recent study published in the [Journal of the American Heart Association](#) found that older women who did a minimum of four hours a day of movement, including cooking and other housework, had a 43% lower risk of heart disease and a 30% lower risk of stroke than the women who did less than two hours a day of these chores.

"The study demonstrates that all movement counts towards [disease prevention](#)," study first author [Steve Nguyen](#), a postdoctoral scholar at the University of California, San Diego, Herbert Wertheim School of Public Health, [said](#) when the study was published. "Spending more time in daily life movement, which includes a wide range of activities we all do while on our feet and out of our chairs, resulted in a lower risk of cardiovascular disease."

5. Gardening

Digging, moving plants, pulling weeds, raking and mowing can all get your heart rate up and help you break a sweat. In fact, the [American Heart Association](#) considers gardening a moderate-intensity aerobic

workout.

"Why does gardening seem to be so beneficial to health? It combines physical activity with [social interaction](#) and exposure to nature and sunlight," [Dr. Richard Thompson](#), past president of the Royal College of Physicians, said in an article published recently in the [*Clinical Medicine Journal*](#).

"Working in the garden restores dexterity and strength, and the aerobic [exercise](#) that is involved can easily use the same number of calories as might be expended in a gym," he added.

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