

Exercise in Hypertension- Its Role and Recommendations

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Abstract

Hypertension is one of the most common medical disorders. It is associated with an increased incidence of all-cause and cardiovascular disease mortality. Physical exercise is found to have positive health benefits and improve well being of a person since time immemorial. Exercise is an integral component of lifestyle modifications. Lifestyle modifications such as regular exercise, weight loss (if overweight), dietary changes such as salt restriction, and cessation of smoking are advocated for the prevention, treatment, and control of hypertension. There are several mechanisms proposed for the beneficial effects of exercise in hypertension and include neurohumoral, vascular, and structural adaptations. Aerobic exercise training leads to reductions in resting BP of 5 to 7 mm Hg in individuals with hypertension. Regular exercise has proved to normalize the elevated blood pressure of mild to moderate intensity by many studies. Mild to moderate exercise has low risk and very few contraindications for most people. Based upon the current scientific evidence, the following prescription regarding exercise is recommended for patients with hypertension: *Frequency*- on most, preferably all, days of the week; *Intensity*- moderate intensity (40-60% of VO₂R); *Time*- =30 min of continuous or accumulated physical activity per day; *Type*- primarily aerobic endurance physical activity involving large muscle groups supplemented by resistance exercise.

Key words: Hypertension, Exercise, Physical Activity, Aerobic, Exercise Prescription, Guidelines