

Get Your Heart Going!

Since February is Heart Month, why not try some exercises that are good for your heart—and the rest of your body too? There are a lot of ways you can get moving toward a more heart-healthy future.

Ready? Let's go!



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Double the Fun

Whether you jump with several ropes and a whole team, or with a single rope by yourself, this traditional playground game provides a good workout!

For more than 30 years, schools have come together in February for a heart-healthy activity: jumping rope. It's part of the nationwide Jump Rope for Heart program. Schools which participate ask kids and teens to jump rope—a very heart-healthy exercise!

The other way Jump Rope for Heart helps the cause is by raising money for the American Heart Association. Over the years, Jump Rope for Heart has collected more than \$700 million to help fight heart disease and stroke.

Even kids who don't normally jump rope say they enjoyed Jump Rope for Heart. "It was fun because I got to jump with all my friends," says Trey Z., 13, of Pennsylvania. His brother, Chadd, 11, agrees. "It makes me feel great to be able to raise money and have fun doing it," he says. "My friends and I had a blast."



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHN FLETCHER/AUTISHELL PRODUCTIONS, LLC

Double Dutch—when you jump rope using two ropes at a time, like the team in the photo above—looks like it would be difficult. But it also looks like a lot of fun!

Not ready to join your nearest double Dutch team? You can also get healthy benefits just by jumping rope with one rope. And you can still have fun with your friends and classmates at the same time.



How do you know if the jump rope you have chosen is the right size? Hold the handles at each end of the rope in your hands, and stand on the middle of the rope with either one or two feet. Pull your arms, still holding the handles, up. A rope is the right size for you if your hands come up to your armpits, according to "Dr. Jump," Dr. Ken Solis, a champion jumper listed in the Guinness Book of World Records. Learn more about the sport from his Web site, www.drjump.com.

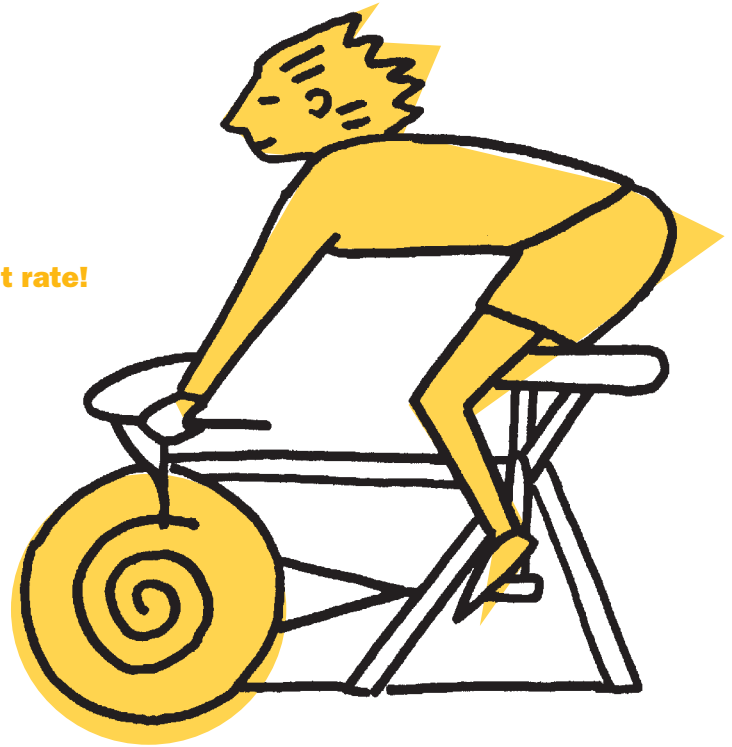
Check Your Pulse

You can measure how hard your heart is working during exercise without any special equipment. This is called checking your pulse. Feel for your pulse along the side of your wrist, just below the base of your thumb. Lightly place the tips of the index and middle fingers of your other hand on that spot. Watch the second hand on a clock, or ask someone to time you. Count the number of beats you feel in 10 seconds. Multiply that number by 6. The answer is your heart rate—the number of times your heart beats in one minute.

First, try it when you are not exercising. It might take you some time to find your pulse. Write in your numbers here:

_____ x 6 = _____ **This is your heart rate!**

number of beats in six seconds number of beats in one minute



Now try it after you exercise. Find an activity that you can do for a couple of minutes, such as jogging in place, riding a stationary bicycle, doing jumping jacks, or jumping rope. Take your pulse as soon as you stop and write the number of beats here:

_____ x 6 = _____ **This is your heart rate!**

number of beats in six seconds number of beats in one minute

How do your two heart rates compare?

Recommendations for target heart rates while exercising vary depending on a person's age, fitness abilities, and heart health. Ask your doctor how intensely you should be exercising. You can also check with your physical education teacher, your school nurse, or your parents to help you figure out what exercises are healthiest for you and your heart.

Be a Heart-Healthy Valentine!

Not only is February Heart Month, it's also the month when people share hearts of a different kind. Valentine's Day, on Feb. 14, is one of the biggest candy holidays around.

But you don't need a big, heart-shaped box of chocolates to let people know that you care. Instead, why not try some healthy, candy-free ways to spend time with your loved ones this Valentine's Day?

The best news? You can use these tips year round—and you don't have to worry about cavities, either!

- ★ **Organize a family walk**, suggests Janet Peterson, associate professor and director of the Exercise Physiology Laboratory at Linfield College in Oregon. That way, you can get some exercise together, and also spend some time talking and catching up.
- ★ Many young people **make “coupons” for their parents** for Valentine's Day or other holidays. You can make coupons that your folks can exchange for your doing the dishes, sure, but how about some healthy coupons? Make a coupon that entitles a parent to a worry-free jog while you watch younger siblings, or make a coupon challenging your mom or dad to a game of tennis. This would work well for active grandparents, too!
- ★ With your friends, **mix up your usual games or sports by giving them a Valentine theme**. For instance, choose a bunch of different-colored balls (but make sure one is red), and invent a game where the red ball means something different than the others. Could you use only the red ball to win your game? Or assign a different point value to each color ball and play using all the balls at once in a fast-paced game of basketball or soccer. It's up to you—get creative!

DID YOU KNOW?

To burn off the calories in two chocolate kisses, you would have to laugh for 15 minutes, according to a 2005 report by a researcher at Vanderbilt University in Tennessee.



Personal Get Up and Go Planner

Finding time to make healthy changes can be difficult. It helps if you plan ahead. Use this planner to help you. Fill in two weeks' worth of dates as shown at right. Then list ways you can Get Up and Go each day. Check off the activities and list others as you go. Use the planner to find time to Get Up and Go and to keep track of your progress!

date: Feb. 1

- shoot hoops
- yoga lesson
- play Wii
- Go for run

MY PLAN:
EXTRAS:
Walked to store
Danced all night at Valentine's Day school dance



Love Your Heart!

There are a lot of ways you can get a good cardiovascular workout. Challenge yourself to get at least 60 minutes of cardio exercise each day this month—your heart will love you for it!

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