

## Healthy Heart Challenge

### What?

This February, we're focusing on your heart. The heart works like the body's engine, so keep it running smoothly. Adding a little exercise could make all the difference. Use this challenge as a way to strengthen your heart and improve your health and well-being.

### How?

The Healthy Heart Challenge focuses on heart-healthy exercise, specifically intervals. Using short bursts of intense exercise followed either by rest or easy exercise can strengthen your heart. Push to increase your heart rate as much as possible during harder exercises, and bring the rate back down for the recovery period. Challenge yourself by doing walking or core training intervals one to three times per week. When you participate, make sure you start slowly. For your first day, ease into the workout. It's okay to have energy left after the first one. Increase the intensity when you are comfortable.

#### Interval training 1: Walking

Interval training 1 is a great low-impact exercise. Start this heart-healthy workout by walking at a comfortable pace for three minutes. For the next two minutes increase the pace. You should be challenging yourself during this time. Drop back down to an easier pace for three minutes. Do this for at least 15-20 minutes.

#### Interval training 2: Core training

Core strength is key when it comes to exercising. To complete this workout, start with doing as many butterfly crunches as possible for 20 seconds, followed by 20 seconds of side to side abs. Start with one set. If you can do more, add up to two more sets, as needed. For those who need even more, try adding another ab workout or increasing the time. Go to [www.fitnessmagazine.com/workout/abs/exercises/flatter-abs-in-2-weeks/](http://www.fitnessmagazine.com/workout/abs/exercises/flatter-abs-in-2-weeks/) for instructions on performing the ab exercises.

**Sample Schedule:** Adjust this, as needed. If you feel discomfort, discontinue the exercise or modify the intensity. Remember to start slowly.

Monday – Interval Training 1: Walking  
 Tuesday – Rest Day  
 Wednesday – Interval Training 2: Core  
 Thursday – Rest Day  
 Friday – Interval Training 1: Walking  
 Saturday – Rest Day  
 Sunday – Rest Day

### Why?

Heart disease is serious, but you can reduce your risk with exercise. Strengthening your heart through exercise is one way to fight heart disease. A healthy heart can increase brain health and blood flow, and add years to your life.