

# Balancing Act!

## Cardio Training for Stress Relief

If you want to improve your resilience against stress, cardio workouts may be the way to go. Regular aerobic training reduces the heart rate response to psychological stress more than either resistance training or no training, according to a study published in the journal *Psychophysiology* (2004; 41 [4], 552–62).

Forty-five sedentary, nonsmoking male and female participants aged 18–30 participated in aerobic training, resistance training or no training for 6 weeks. Outcome measures included blood pressure and heart rate, among other variables.

Researchers at the University of Maryland in College Park, Maryland, reported that participants in both the aerobic training and resistance training groups had lower systolic blood pressure levels than the group who did no training. Aerobically trained participants had lower heart rate levels during psychological stress after training than did either of the other groups.



The researchers suggested that since aerobic training can lower heart rate response to psychological stress, it may offer a protective benefit over the long term against an increase in the risk of coronary heart disease.

So, if you feel stressed, help yourself out with a short aerobic training session of walking, running, biking, swimming, or playing a sport. Not only will it help you feel less stressed, but it will help your heart and your body weight!

20 minutes a day, most days of the week (4-5 days) is all it takes to feel and look better. Now that the weather is getting nicer, it's a great time of year to start adding in a daily walk or outdoor play to your schedule.

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