



What **You** Can do to Lower **Your** Blood Pressure

1. **Go for power walks.** Hypertensive patients who went for fitness walks at a brisk pace lowered pressure by almost 8 mmHg over 6 mmHg, found the study. Exercise helps the heart use oxygen more efficiently, so it doesn't work as hard to pump blood.
2. **Breathe deeply.** Slow breathing and meditative practices quigong, yoga and tai chi decrease stress hormones, which elevate renin, a kidney enzyme which raises blood pressure. Try these practices 5 minutes in the morning and night to help lower blood pressure.
3. **Potassium rich foods.** Rich fruits and vegetables high in potassium are important for aiding in lowering blood pressure. Top sources of potassium include: sweet potatoes, tomatoes, orange juice, potatoes, bananas, kidney beans, peas, cantaloupe, honeydew melon and dried fruits such as prunes and raisins.
4. **Be Salt Smart.** Cutting sodium means more than going easy on the salt shaker. Half a teaspoon of salt contains 1200mg of sodium. Cutting down to 1500mg per day will aid in lowering blood pressure. Watch for sodium in processed foods and canned goods. Instead, season your foods with herbs, spices, lemon and salt-free blends.
5. **Chocolate? Try Dark Chocolate.** Dark chocolate varieties contain flavanols that make blood vessels more elastic and increase the chances of low blood pressure. In one study, 18% of patients who ate it every day saw

blood pressure decrease. Have half an ounce daily, and make sure it contains at least 70% cocoa.

6. **Try Decaf Coffee.** Caffeine can raise blood pressure by tightening blood vessels and by magnifying the effects of stress. One study found that caffeine consumption of 500 mg—roughly three 8-ounce cups of coffee—increased blood pressure by 4 mmHg, and that effect lasted until bedtime.

7. **Try Tea.** One study on participants who sipped three cups of a hibiscus tea daily lowered systolic blood pressure by 7 points in 6 weeks on average, say researchers from Tufts University.

8. **Relax with Music.** The right tunes can help you get low blood pressure according to researchers at the University of Florence in Italy. They asked 28 adults who were already taking hypertension medication to listen to soothing classical, Celtic, or Indian music for 30 minutes daily while breathing slowly. After a week, the listeners had lowered their average systolic reading by 3.2 points; a month later, readings were down 4.4 points.

