



HOLY FAMILY
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Water Workouts Can Help Your Heart

Swimming has always been a great way to decrease stress, but it can actually ease more than your mind. Swimming is not only fun and relaxing, but also helps to reduce blood pressure, according to a recent study published in the April 2012 American Journal of Cardiology. Check with your doctor before starting any new exercise regime. With swimming, that's especially critical if you have heart or lung disease, since water pressure can increase the stress on your heart and lungs. If you are a beginning swimmer or feel uneasy about getting back into a pool, wear a belt, vest or flotation device to help keep your head above water.

For the heart: Researchers studied 43 sedentary older adults with elevated blood pressure and found that a 3 month program of slow to moderate swimming lowered systolic blood pressure (the top number) by an average of 9 points. What's more, the water workouts – 3 or 4 days a week swimming laps for 15 – 45 minutes – led to a significant improvement in their vascular function, a first-of-its-kind finding. “Their carotid arteries became more elastic and responsive to changes in blood flow, which is beneficial because when stiff the heart will have a harder time pumping blood,” says Hirofumi Tanaka, Ph.D., one of the authors of the study and director of the Cardiovascular Aging Research Laboratory at the University of Texas at Austin.

In addition to decreasing cardiovascular disease, swimming can burn roughly the same amount of calories as jogging with less stress on your joints. It also provides a cooling, energizing and thanks, to water buoyancy, uplifting experience.

Before You Begin, Check For Cleanliness. Poorly maintained swimming pools are common, allowing bacteria and viruses to cause outbreaks of gastrointestinal illness and ear and eye infections. Among the most common problems are poorly controlled circulation and filtering systems and inadequate disinfection. Ask employees about chlorine and ph levels which should be checked twice a day. Chlorine should be in a range of 1 to 3 parts per million, and ph should range between 7.2 and 7.8. The water should have little odor and clear enough to see the bottom of the pool easily.

DON'T Go It Alone. Try always to swim with a buddy or make sure that a lifeguard is on duty. Even expert swimmers can have water emergencies.

Stay Hydrated. Bring enough water for drinking before, during, and after a workout. It's too easy to forget that you're sweating when you're in the water.



Once You're In, Try These Tips for Beginners and Those Who Do Not Swim Frequently:

- ◆ Use the breaststroke. It will allow you to breathe with your head above the water, which is less intimidating for beginners. (Ideally, swimmers should exhale through their nose when their head is submerged.)
- ◆ Stay on the Surface. When swimming, don't let your knees drop deep in the water. Try to keep your body horizontal, with your hips and waist in line with the water's surface. That way you'll face less resistance and move more efficiently through the water.
- ◆ Follow Proper Etiquette. When swimming laps, always stay to the right. That enables more than one person to swim in a single lane.

Information from Consumer Reports On Health, June 2012. Happy Summer and Safe fun-filled swimming. Your Parish Nurse.

To contact Holy Family Parish Nurse Ministry call 330-688-6412 ext. 462 or view at www.holyfamilystow.org.