

# Cardio and strength training: why do both

Together, they build muscle, boost heart health, and burn fat



Cardio and strength training are two kinds of exercise that can improve your whole health. Cardio gets your heart pumping while strength training creates stronger, leaner muscles. Understanding how they work separately and together can help you build a workout that works best for you.

## What to know about cardio

Cardio exercise increases your heart rate. During cardio workouts, your heart pumps faster and harder to deliver your muscles the extra oxygen they need. Cardio exercises include:



Running



Cycling



High-intensity interval training (HIIT)



Swimming

### Cardio goal

2.5 hours (moderate) or 75 minutes (vigorous) a week.

### How your body benefits

- Burns more calories during workout
- Strengthens heart health and endurance
- Boosts mood and energy
- Helps keep blood pressure, blood sugar, and weight in check
- Helps prevent illness by boosting your immune system

## What to know about strength training

Strength training uses a form of resistance — such as weights, exercise bands, or your own body — to strengthen muscles through repetition. Strength training exercises include:



Weightlifting



Yoga and barre



Resistance band exercises



Pushups, situps, and squats

### Strength training goal

2 times a week.

### How your body benefits

- Improves metabolism to burn more calories, even at rest
- Strengthens heart health and endurance
- Boosts mood and energy
- Helps prevent injury by improving flexibility, balance, and bone health
- Helps maintain a healthy weight

## Stay fit and feel your best

Your doctor can help you build a workout program that balances cardio exercise and strength training. Use the **Find Care** feature at [anthem.com](https://www.anthem.com) to connect with a doctor in your plan's network.

Sources:  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: *What counts as physical activity for adults?* (December 6, 2023). [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).  
Mayo Clinic: *Aerobic exercise: Top 10 reasons to get physical* (November 18, 2023). [mayoclinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org).  
Mayo Clinic: *Strength training: Get stronger, leaner, healthier* (April 29, 2023). [mayoclinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org).

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