

**EXERCISE THYSELF!** The first doctor that we know prescribed exercise as a medicine was Susrata, who lived in ancient India. Hippocrates—yes, he who authored the Oath—later prescribed exercise, too, as did, still later, the Roman, Galen.<sup>1</sup> The prescience of these physicians was astounding: the evidence is now overwhelming that exercise treats depression, reduces the likelihood of burnout, helps with weight control, reduces blood pressure, reduces the likelihood of diabetes, improves balance and reduces falls in the elderly, and, to “cut to the chase,” simply extends life.<sup>2</sup> An inactive lifestyle is the equivalent, with respect to mortality, of systolic blood pressure that’s 40 mmHg higher (or diastolic that’s 20 mmHg higher)!<sup>3</sup>

1. The guideline for adults is 150 min or more per week of moderate (or more) intensity exercise, such as rapid walking or jogging (at least 100 steps/min).<sup>4</sup> For those who wear pedometers (or carry the iPhone, or wear an Apple Watch or similar device), it’s 10,000 or more steps/day; if there is an exercise-session in the day of at least moderate intensity, the number of total steps/day can be lower.
2. Muscle-strengthening (resistance) exercise is also good as an aerobic adjunct, perhaps twice weekly at least.
3. Any exercise is better than none!

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<sup>1</sup> Tipton CM. The history of “exercise is medicine” in ancient civilizations. *Adv Physiol Educ* 2014;38:109-117.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, the USDHHS 2008 guidelines for physical activity (you can download from the website), or a nice, quick summary of the literature in Thorndike AN, Mills S, Sonnenberg L, et al. *PLoS One* 2014; Jun 20;9(6):e100251. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0100251.

<sup>3</sup> Li CS, Liu CC, Tsai MK, et al. Motivating patients to exercise: translating high blood pressure into equivalent risk of inactivity. *J Hypertens* 2015; 33:287-293.

<sup>4</sup> Tudor-Locke C, Sisson SB, Collova T, et al. Pedometer-determined step count guideline for classifying walking intensity in a young ostensibly healthy population. *Can J Appl Physiol* 2005;30:666-676.