

The Natural Blood Pressure Lifestyle Report

**Bonus Report With
The Natural Blood Pressure Exercise Program**

By: Christian Goodman

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The Hypertensive Lifestyle

If you have high blood pressure, your body is trying to tell you something: Your lifestyle needs to change!

If you're like most Americans, you're working too hard, not sleeping enough, not exercising enough, not getting enough nutrition, and eating too much toxic junk food.

There's even a name for this "hypertensive lifestyle." It's called Metabolic Syndrome, or Syndrome X. People with Metabolic Syndrome typically have excess weight around their waist, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, high triglycerides, and low HDL (high density lipoproteins).

If you're a man with a waist larger than 40 inches or a woman with a waist larger than 35 inches, then you most likely have high blood pressure. You may not even realize that this silent killer is destroying you from the inside out.

What is High Blood Pressure?

High blood pressure is not a disease in itself. Rather, it is a symptom of heart disease. More specifically, it is a symptom of atherosclerosis, or the hardening of your artery walls.

Arteries are the blood vessels that carry blood away from your heart; they supply oxygen and nutrients to your tissues. (Veins, on the other hand, carry deoxygenated blood back to the heart.)

When cholesterol gets stuck within small injuries along arterial walls, it forms plaques, also known as atheromas. These hard plaques narrow the artery, causing an increase in blood pressure. The heart has to pump harder to circulate blood.

These plaques not only constrict blood vessels, but they also weaken them. Atherosclerosis can lead to aneurysms, strokes, blood clots, and heart attacks. By reducing blood flow, atherosclerosis may also affect the brain, kidneys, and sexual function.

A high-fat diet combined with a sedentary lifestyle contributes to the build-up of arterial plaque. But what causes those small injuries along arterial walls in the first place?

Free radicals damage arterial walls. The body is actually trying to repair this damage by placing fatty cholesterol over the small wounds. But over time, the cholesterol hardens, leading to atherosclerosis.

Free radicals are unstable molecules with unpaired electrons. Smoking, toxins, and pollutants cause the formation of free radicals.

Since they have an unpaired electron, free radicals rob electrons from nearby atoms. When this occurs in the body, it results in tissue damage.

Normally, natural antioxidants like vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients (plant nutrients) neutralize free radicals before they cause damage. However, damage will occur when antioxidant nutrients are low, or when there is an excessive number of free radicals.

Other factors contribute to atherosclerosis as well. Chronic inflammation, or activation of immune system, makes the problem worse. White blood cells attack the plaque as if it's a foreign invader; this causes further tissue damage.

Atherosclerosis is a complicated problem. The solution, therefore, is not simple. In order to reverse atherosclerosis, you have to change your lifestyle.

A complete overhaul of your lifestyle may not be easy. It may be the most difficult thing you've ever done. But it's worth it. Your life depends on it. Moreover, when you lose weight, get healthy, and lower your blood pressure, you'll be able to get more out of life. You'll be more active. You'll enjoy life to the fullest.

You'll have to change your attitude as well as your lifestyle. Remember, high blood pressure is a symptom. It's a signal from your body that it's time for a change. Once you make that change, you'll be able to feel a major difference. You won't literally feel your blood pressure drop, but you will feel the dissipation of an internal pressure, as if a weight has been lifted off your chest.

Now, let's get down to business and learn how to lower blood pressure naturally.

Smoking and Alcohol Use

Do I really need to explain why smoking is bad for you? I didn't think so.

Suffice it to say that smoking increases blood pressure. If you smoke, quit. It's that simple.

You're not a teenager anymore. Smoking is not cool. Make up your mind to quit, and do whatever is necessary to quit. There are many different smoking cessation methods available today.

The question of alcohol use is a little more complicated. Several recent studies suggest that moderate alcohol use - red wine in particular - may help lower blood pressure. That means no more than one glass of wine a day for women and no more than two glasses for men. Anything more than that will have negative health consequences.

And, in fact, even moderate alcohol consumption increases the risk of certain types of cancer. Alcohol is a toxin!

Scientists attribute the heart-healthy effects of red wine to phytonutrients that act as antioxidants. But you can get the same benefits by eating grapes and other fresh fruits!

Toxic Overload

Our society is overflowing with toxic chemicals. From personal care products to processed foods, industrial chemicals find their way into our bodies and generate free radicals that set the stage for hypertension.

A recent study found that 93 percent of Americans have detectable levels bisphenol-A (BPA) in their bloodstream. BPA is a chemical used to soften plastics. It's commonly found in plastic bottles and containers.

Studies show that BPA mimics estrogen and acts as a hormone disruptor. It has been linked to heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and developmental problems.

Avoid plastic bottles and food containers. Never place plastic in the microwave. In fact, avoid the microwave whenever possible. It destroys nutrients.

Use natural versions of personal care products and cleaning products. The less you're exposed to toxic chemicals, the better.

Toxins are in your food, too. Food manufacturers add all sorts of toxic chemicals to foods as preservatives, colors, and flavorings. MSG, for instance, is in a large percentage of processed food.

Here's the best piece of advice in this report: **Eat real, whole, unprocessed food.**

Change your grocery shopping habits. Start shopping around the outside of the store only. Don't even go down those middle aisles lined with cans, bags, and boxes of artificial foodstuff.

Avoid all processed foods, including artificial sweeteners like aspartame. (Studies show that artificial sweeteners actually promote weight gain!)

Buy organic whenever possible, especially when it comes to meat, dairy, and eggs. As for vegetables and fruits, some are exposed to more toxic chemicals than others.

The Environmental Working Group has released a list of the **12 most contaminated fruits and veggies**; you should always buy the organic version of these 12 foods:

1. Peaches
2. Apples
3. Bell Peppers
4. Celery
5. Nectarines
6. Strawberries
7. Cherries
8. Kale
9. Leafy Greens
10. Grapes
11. Carrots
12. Pears

Why is it important to avoid foods grown with toxic pesticides and chemical fertilizers? These toxins get into the food and into your body. You can't wash them all away.

Once inside your body, toxins cause free radical damage. They also create more work for your liver.

The liver is the main organ of detox. It breaks down harmful toxins into components that can be eliminated. The liver also breaks down fats. When you ingest too many toxins, the liver becomes overworked. As a result, more toxins get stored in your fat cells, and more fat cells build up in your body.

It's impossible to avoid all toxins, but you should be aware of them. Before you eat something or use a certain product, think to yourself: "Am I about to put a poisonous chemical into my body?" If you don't know, put it down. Find an alternative.

Fasting for Health

Many natural health practitioners recommend fasting as a method of detox. A water fast or juice fast gives your digestive system a break and allows your body to eliminate stored toxins. Typical fasts last three days to three weeks.

Much of the immune system is actually located in the gut. By giving your digestive system a break, the immune cells that are normally busy digesting food are freed up to eliminate toxins and microbes.

During a fast, as fat cells are burned, they release toxins which are eliminated in the urine. Be sure to drink plenty of water during a fast, and consult with your doctor before starting a fast.

A fast may also help you break long-standing addictions to junk food. If you want to lower your blood pressure, you have to give up the junk food.

Now let's learn about the healthy foods that we should be eating.

Nutrition: The Whole Food Diet

I'll say it again: **Eat whole, unrefined foods.** Focus on vegetables, fruits, seeds, nuts, legumes, and whole grains. Avoid processed foods, fatty foods, and excessive consumption of meat.

If you have high blood pressure and you're overweight, then weight loss should be a top priority. Losing a few pounds may not have an immediate impact on your blood pressure, but once you get down to a healthy weight, your blood pressure will normalize, in most cases.

Focus on eating healthy foods and slowly dropping excess pounds. Be patient. Atheromas, the fatty plaques on arterial walls, usually begin to dissolve after a healthy weight is achieved. You can reverse your hypertension through with healthy nutrition, exercise, and stress reduction.

You don't have to starve yourself to lose excess fat. In fact, diets that promote small portion sizes do not work. They may spur some initial weight loss, but in virtually all cases, people regain the weight. Why? Because they get hungry!

Do not let yourself get hungry. Eat three square meals a day and snack on fruits and vegetables between meals. Drink plenty of water to keep your appetite under control.

You don't have to go hungry to lose weight. It's *what* you eat that matters more than how much you eat or how often you eat. Eat healthy, nutritious, whole foods, and your body will be healthy.

In *Eat to Live*, Joel Fuhrman, M.D., explains that Americans are overfed and undernourished. We're eating too much artificial junk food and not enough nutritious whole food.

Dr. Fuhrman developed a formula for scoring different foods. His Nutrient Density formula is simply this: $\text{Health} = \text{Nutrients} / \text{Calories}$.

You want to eat the most nutrient dense foods - that is, the foods that offer the most nutrients per calorie.

The most nutrient-dense foods are leafy greens like kale, collards, and spinach. Next comes vegetables, fruits, and legumes. Starches, meats, dairy products, and processed foods have much lower nutrient densities.

Here's a sample of nutrient density scores from drfuhrman.com:

Kale - 1000
Collards - 1000
Spinach - 739
Cabbage - 481
Red Pepper - 420
Broccoli - 342
Cauliflower - 295
Asparagus - 234
Strawberries - 212
Tomatoes - 164
Orange - 109
Apples - 76
Kidney Beans - 71
Lentils - 68
Pineapple - 64
Oatmeal - 53
Cucumbers - 50
Brown Rice - 41
Salmon - 39
Shrimp - 38
Walnuts - 29
Chicken Breast - 27
Eggs - 27
Low Fat Yogurt - 26
Corn - 25
Whole Wheat Bread - 25
Whole Mil - 20
White Bread - 18
Apple Juice - 16
Potato Chips - 11
American Cheese - 10
Vanilla Ice Cream - 9
French Fries - 7
Cola - 1

Most Americans tend to fill up on high-calorie junk food. As a result, they're not getting enough nutrients. Since their bodies crave wholesome nutrients, their brains signal them to eat more. That's how junk food promotes overeating. And we all know the outcome of overeating.

If you want to lose weight, get healthy, and lower your cholesterol naturally, eat more leafy greens, vegetables, fruits, legumes, and whole grains, and cut down (drastically) on meat, dairy, and processed foods.

Processed foods have been stripped of their nutrition. “Fortified foods” have some nutrients added back to them, but not all. Processed foods are artificial and lifeless, and they often contain toxic ingredients like MSG and aspartame.

Fresh, whole foods, on the other hand, contain the nutrients you need.

Not All Fats Are Created Equally

Not all fats are the same. Most Americans consume far too many omega-6 fats and not enough omega-3 fats. Omega-3 fats are found in flaxseed, walnuts, cold-water fish like salmon, and fish oil supplements. Omega-3 fats in moderation may actually help lower blood pressure. Try to eat a small portion of salmon once or twice a week, or sprinkle a spoonful of flaxseed on your salads.

Omega-3 fats are anti-inflammatory. Omega-6 fats, on the other hand, are pro-inflammatory, and they raise blood pressure. Omega-6 fats are found in vegetable oils, meats, and most processed foods.

Not all cholesterols are the same, either. Low density cholesterol (LDL) contributes to plaque build-up on arterial walls. High density cholesterol (HDL) may actually decrease plaque build-up by dislodging LDL cholesterol stuck to arterial walls. Omega-3 fats decrease LDL (bad cholesterol) and increase HDL (good cholesterol).

Olive oil is probably the healthiest oil for cooking. It lowers LDL and increases HDL. If you cook with oil, use extra-virgin olive oil rather than vegetable oil. However, it's best to avoid the use of oil altogether because it will not help you lose weight.

Here's the skinny on fats: If you're trying lose weight, you should avoid all excess fats. Your body already has enough stored fat; it doesn't require anymore.

You can ruin an otherwise healthy salad by drowning it in artery-clogging salad dressing. Try fresh lime juice instead; it makes a tasty, healthy dressing.

A warning about trans fats: Trans fats are artificially created fats, and they're the worst kind of fats. Found in baked goods, fast food, and processed food, trans fats should be avoided at all cost. They lower HDL cholesterol and increase LDL cholesterol. Nutritionists at Harvard concluded that trans fat alone could be responsible for as many as 30,000 premature coronary artery deaths each year.

Put Down the Salt Shaker!

The famous DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) study found that most Americans consume five to ten times as much sodium as they need. High sodium increases blood pressure for most people.

If you gradually reduce the amount of salt that you add to your food, your taste will gradually change. If you must use salt, use natural sea salt, which contains heart-healthy trace minerals.

But most sodium in the American diet does not come from the salt shaker! Most of it comes from processed foods. How much sodium is in that bag of chips or that can of soup? Go for the low-sodium variety, or better yet, avoid processed food altogether. Condiments and sauces are also notorious for high levels of sodium. Always read labels.

Skip the Caffeine

Caffeine increases blood pressure, too. If you're addicted to drinking twelve sodas a day, then you've got a lot of work ahead of you, my friend. If you absolutely cannot survive without your morning cup of coffee or tea, then make sure it's a small cup, and limit yourself to that one cup a day. You can do it.

Skip the Sugar, Too

A diet high in sugar will make blood platelets stickier and contribute to plaque build-up on arterial walls. A high-sugar diet also makes it more difficult to lose weight. When your sweet tooth starts yelling for a treat, reach for a piece of sweet fruit. Fruit will satisfy your craving and supply healthy antioxidants.

Eat Less Meat

You don't have to go vegan or vegetarian, but if you have high blood pressure, you should dramatically lower your consumption of meat, especially fatty red meats. Replace red meat with fish or poultry. Make vegetables and whole grains the main part of your meals.

If you do eat red meat, choose organic, free-range, grass-fed meat. Most beef is corn-fed. But cows are not meant to eat corn; they're meant to eat grass. Grass-fed beef is healthier and higher in omega-3 fats. Happy cows make healthy meat.

Eat More Fiber

A high-fiber diet can significantly lower blood pressure. Fiber, also known as roughage, is the indigestible part of plants. Fruits, vegetables, legumes, and whole grains are ideal sources of fiber. Get your fiber in the morning with a nice stewed apple or bowl of oatmeal. Opt for brown rice and whole wheat instead of refined grains like white rice and white flour.

Lose Excess Weight and Keep It Off

If you want to lower your blood pressure naturally, you don't need to go on a "diet." You need to change your lifestyle and start making healthy choices at the grocery store, in your kitchen, and at the dinner table.

Diets don't work. Most people who go on diets lose a few pounds and gain back even more. Such a cycle of yo-yo dieting is not healthy for your heart.

You may need to change the way you think about food. Do not think of food as an emotionally comforting treat; think of it as your medicine. Turn to friends and family – not pizza and ice cream - for emotional support.

By eating more wholesome, nutrient-dense foods and avoiding junk food, you will slowly lose excess weight and lower your blood pressure naturally.

Supplements for High Blood Pressure

Before we review these supplements, let me point out that it's best to get all your vitamins and supplements from fresh, whole foods. However, most Americans do not eat enough fruits and vegetables to provide the nutrients that they need. You may want to consider some of these heart-healthy supplements for lowering blood pressure.

Potassium

Potassium is an essential mineral that balances sodium. The DASH study found that a high-potassium diet helps lower blood pressure, especially among individuals with higher salt intakes.

Foods high in potassium include kale, spinach, squash, lima beans, tomatoes, grapes, and melons, as well as chicken and salmon.

Many blood pressure medications may contribute to a potassium deficiency through increased urination. It's important to eat a diet rich in calcium if you take such medications. Sometimes, doctors even prescribe calcium for patients on these medicines.

Talk to your doctor before you start taking any supplements. Certain vitamins and minerals can interfere with some medications.

Calcium

Studies show that people with low calcium intakes are at higher risk of developing hypertension, and calcium helps lower blood pressure.

Good sources of calcium include leafy greens like kale and collards, sardines, and broccoli. Low-fat dairy products are also good sources of calcium. However, you should not consume too much dairy if you're trying to lose weight. High consumption of dairy products may also promote the loss of calcium in the urine.

Magnesium

Magnesium helps to relax muscles as well as blood vessels. Green vegetables, nuts, and whole grains are excellent sources of magnesium.

Again, mineral supplements may help lower blood pressure, but it's best to get your essential minerals by eating a variety of vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds, and whole grains.

Vitamin C

As a natural antioxidant, vitamin C will work to prevent heart disease as well as cancer. Ideally, you should consume vitamin C throughout the day, as the body quickly excretes it. A Boston University School of Medicine Study found that a 500 mg daily supplement of vitamin C can significantly reduce high blood pressure. Many fruits and vegetables are high in vitamin C.

Vitamin E

Vitamin E makes blood platelets less sticky and therefore reduces the chance of plaque build-up and blood clots. Seeds, nuts, olives, and leafy greens are high in vitamin E.

Also a powerful antioxidant, vitamin E works better in the presence of vitamin C - and both of these vitamins work better in the presence of the phytonutrient beta carotene. Most vitamins work better in the presence of certain cofactors, and that's why it's best to get them from fresh plant foods that are rich in vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients. Many of these health-promoting substances do not work as efficiently when they're extracted from their natural environment.

Folic Acid

Folic acid, also known as folate, is a B-complex vitamin naturally found in leafy greens. Studies show that people who get a lot of folate in their diet are less likely to develop high blood pressure.

Do you notice a trend here? Leafy greens seem to supply all the nutrients you need to lower your blood pressure! That's not surprising since they're the most nutrient-dense foods.

Start each meal with a big salad to get your daily dose of heart-healthy nutrients. Experiment with adding greens to recipes. Kale makes a wonderful addition to soups. (But kale is one of those vegetables you probably don't want to eat raw. It's quite bitter and chewy!)

Coenzyme Q10

Coenzyme Q10 is an antioxidant that helps to burn fats and reduce blood pressure. It reduces the free radical damage that initiates the hardening of arteries. The typical recommended dosage is 50 to 200 mg per day.

Omega-3 Fatty Acids

We've already covered the basics about omega-3 fats. If you don't like eating fish or flaxseed, you can supplement omega-3 by taking fish oil, flax seed oil or krill oil.

Herbs for High Blood Pressure

Herbal remedies served as mankind's original medicine. In fact, humans probably learned about medicinal herbs by watching sick animals eat certain bitter plants when they got sick. The herbs below may help lower your blood pressure.

Garlic

Several studies have shown that garlic and other members of the allium family (like onions) provide a protective effect against high blood pressure. Alliums are full of phytonutrients that promote arterial dilation and enhanced blood flow. It's easy to add garlic and onions to soups and other meals.

Ginger

Ginger inhibits blood platelet aggregation and stimulates blood flow. Many people use fresh ginger as an alternative to salt.

Turmeric

Turmeric is a powerful antioxidant that prevents free radical damage as well as platelet clumping. Many curry powders contain both ginger and turmeric. You can use curry powder instead of salt to add a spicy flavor to your food.

Hawthorn

Hawthorn, from the berry of the same name, can dilate blood vessels and enhance circulation. It's widely used to treat heart disease in Europe and has been found to be just as effective as many medications. The normal daily dose is 160 mg, divided into two doses.

Ginko Biloba

Phytonutrients in ginko leaves thin the blood and may help improve the structure of blood vessel walls. People who have bleeding diseases or take blood thinners should be wary of taking ginko. Again, talk to your doctor before you start taking any supplements.

More Lifestyle Changes

Drink Plenty of Water

As people get older, their sense of thirst becomes less sensitive. As a result, older adults tend to drink less water than their body needs. Water is essential for all bodily functions, and it helps to flush out excess fats and toxins.

You should be drinking at least eight glasses of water a day. The kind of water that you drink is important, too. Remember, water in plastic bottles is contaminated with toxins like BPA. Tap water is often contaminated with chemicals, too.

The best way to obtain a cost-efficient supply of healthy water is to invest in a water filter. You can get a quality water filter for less than a hundred dollars. See AmbrosiaWaterFilters.com for several options.

Note that water distillers and reverse osmosis water filters remove natural minerals from the water, creating soft water. Soft water may actually increase high blood pressure, especially if it is artificially created using a water softener. Water softeners typically remove calcium and magnesium and replace them with sodium. Water filters made from activated carbon will remove contaminants without removing trace minerals.

Get Your Body Moving

You need to exercise for at least 30 minutes a day. That doesn't mean you have to go out and join a gym or buy a home gym. You don't even have to buy an expensive DVD. Just set aside 30 minutes each day for exercise.

Walking is one of the best forms of exercise. A brisk walk will get your blood pumping and help clear your mind. The risk of injury is low, and nearly everybody can perform this simple exercise.

Tai chi, yoga, and other Eastern exercises are excellent for hypertension. These low-impact exercises will oxygenate your tissues, relieve stress, build muscle, increase balance, and help you lose weight.

Exercises that expand the chest may allow your heart to pump with less pressure. The yoga pose known as cobra is great for expanding the chest. You can also do chest exercises with light dumbbells. Bench presses, flies, and pullovers will expand the chest.

Remember to breathe deeply while exercising.

Get Enough Sleep

A 2009 University of Chicago study found that people who sleep fewer hours are more likely to have high blood pressure. Sleep is down-time for your body and your mind. Sleep allows your body to repair itself and filter out toxins. Adults should get at least seven hours of sleep a night (and many people need eight hours).

Set a regular bedtime and stick to it. If you have trouble falling asleep, make a point to begin winding down before bedtime. Don't sit in front of the TV or computer until you're ready to pass out. Take a relaxing warm bath or shower and read or listen to music before bedtime.

Since you spend a third of your life in your bed, you should invest in a quality mattress and comfortable pillows. Make sure that your bedroom is cool and dark. Any amount of light can interfere with your ability to fall asleep.

Electronic devices may interfere with your ability to sleep, too. Keep televisions, computers, and other devices out of your bedroom. Think of your bedroom as your relaxation haven - your place of nightly rejuvenation.

If you're still having trouble sleeping, a nightly dose of melatonin may help. Melatonin is a naturally occurring neurotransmitter that helps regulate the body's biological rhythms.

Healthy Sunlight Exposure

With so much negative publicity about sunlight and cancer, many people seem to be avoiding the sunlight. *That's not healthy!* While sunburns cause cancer, sunlight is the source of all life on our planet.

Recent studies suggest that many Americans children are deficient in vitamin D because they are spending too much time indoors. The skin produces vitamin D when exposed to sunlight. While some foods provide vitamin D, too, sunlight provides the ideal form of the vitamin.

There's no reason to fear the sun. You just need to take sensible precautions to make sure that you don't get sunburned. Primarily, you shouldn't stay out in the sun for too long. Note that many sunscreens contain chemical toxins. If you need to use sunscreen, choose one made from natural ingredients.

Try to spend at least 20 to 30 minutes each day in the sun. A daily walk is a great way to soak up some rays and get in your exercise. Regular sunlight exposure will also help you sleep better at night.

A growing body of research suggests that vitamin D levels affect blood pressure. For

example, high blood pressure is more common during the winter in locations that get little sunlight during winter. It's known that vitamin D deficiency increases parathyroid production, which can increase blood pressure.

Emotions, Stress, and Relaxation: The Mind-Body Connection

Your dietary habits, your exercise habits, and even your environment all affect your blood pressure. Your attitude affects your blood pressure, too. The body is connected to the mind; they are one in the same. Negative attitudes and emotions wreak havoc on your body at the cellular level.

Studies show that people with Type A personalities are prone to develop high blood pressure.

Type A behavior is associated with competitiveness, aggression, hostility, anger, and impatience. It's easy to see how these negative emotions would cause high blood pressure. When you're angry and tense, your muscles and blood vessels tense up. Your body follows your mind.

What's really interesting is that recent research shows that people with Type D personalities are just as likely to suffer from high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease.

Type D behavior is characterized by emotional suppression and social inhibition.

Type A personalities seem to experience negative emotions too frequently, while Type D ("distressed") personalities have trouble expressing emotions. In both cases, intense negative emotions cause tension in the body.

Whether you have a hostile Type A personality or a distressed Type D personality, you have to learn how to deal with your negative emotions without letting them get the best of you.

Keeping everything bottled up inside is just as unhealthy as throwing a temper tantrum!

Relaxation exercises, or focused breaks, will help you recognize your emotions and release them in a healthy, calm manner.

Meditation is a wonderful relaxation exercise for relieving stress. In its simplest form, meditation is simply focusing on your breath. Sit in a quiet place, be still, and focus on your breath. Try not to think of anything else. Other thoughts will enter your mind - and that's okay - but do not latch onto them. Let them pass through, and return your focus to your breath.

Dr. Andrew Weil has popularized a particular relaxation exercise known as the 4-7-8 breathing technique. You can do this anytime, anywhere, and it will help you calm down. Simply inhale deeply for 4 counts, hold the breath for 7 counts, and exhale fully for 8 counts. You should be forcing the last bit of air out of your lungs by the time you hit the 8 count.

Repeat this breath cycle 4 to 8 times. You will notice immediate results.

Whenever you feel negative emotions, take a focused break. Do something to clear your mind and help you relax, whether it's deep breathing or taking a walk.

Don't hold grudges against people. We're all human. We all make mistakes. Holding a grudge will only cause you more suffering. Try to keep a light heart and sense of humor at all times.

Avoid people, places, and things that stir up negative emotions. I stopped watching television news several years ago. It's too depressing! I have better things to do with my time. When something important happens, I always hear about it.

Cultivate positive emotions. If you are a spiritual person, spend more time praying or meditating. Show gratitude for all the good things in your life. Invite positive people, thoughts, and emotions into your life.

Learn the art of positive thinking. Whenever a negative thought surfaces, change it into a positive thought. Look for opportunities in difficult situations.

Open your heart. Volunteer. Laugh often. Enjoy life. Spend more time with animals and children. These suggestions may seem a bit silly on the surface, but medical research backs them up. For instance, one study found that owning a pet significantly lowers blood pressure. Another study found that heart-failure patients have improved heart function after spending time with a dog. Many hospitals now offer animal therapy to help cheer people up and improve their chances of recovery.

"Opening your heart" and "keeping a light heart" will literally relieve the pressure on that magical organ that pumps your blood.

Lower Your Blood Pressure Naturally

Blood pressure medications come with unpleasant side effects like headaches, dizziness, nausea, joint pain, fatigue, and sexual dysfunction. Some blood pressure medications can even cause strokes and heart attacks!

If you suffer from hypertension or pre-hypertension, you don't have to take medication for the rest of your life. You can lower your blood pressure naturally. (Never stop taking medication without consulting your physician first.)

Here's a summary of the most important steps in lowering your blood pressure naturally:

- If you smoke, quit smoking. Keep trying to quit until you find a cessation program that works for you.
- If you drink, do so in moderation only (and be aware that even moderate consumption of alcohol may increase the risk of certain types of cancer).
- Avoid junk food and processed food.
- Cut back on your consumption of salt, caffeine, fatty foods, and meats, especially red meats.
- Eat a diet consisting primarily of nutrient-dense, whole foods from plants. Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, and whole grains. They'll provide your body with the vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients it needs to keep your heart and blood vessels healthy.
- Avoid exposure to toxic chemicals whenever possible.
- Exercise daily.
- Drink plenty of filtered water.
- Get healthy sunlight exposure.
- Get at least seven hours of sleep a night, and stick to a regular bedtime routine.
- Learn how to deal with negative emotions. A support group or counselor may help.
- Learn how to think positively.
- Relax.

These suggestions will not only help you lower your blood pressure naturally, but they'll also help you enjoy a longer, healthier life!