

## Cardiometabolic Health Month

### Additional Resources

Upcoming Wise & Well Webinar – Register Now!

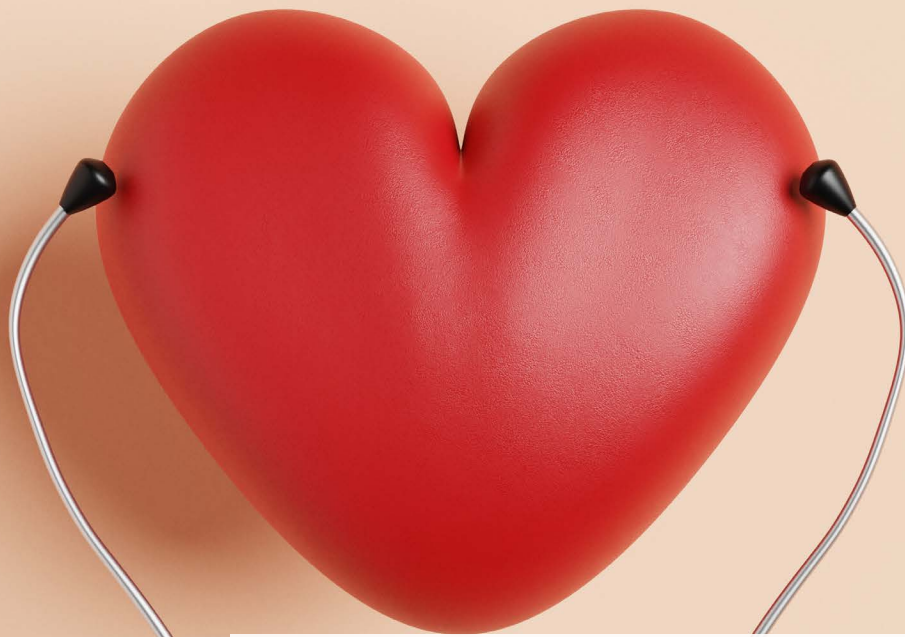
### Monthly Moves

Complete Guide to Heart-Healthy Exercises

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# Wise & Well

Welcome to the Wise & Well Newsletter, where we promote whole-person wellbeing each month and highlight health-related topics to help you be your best.

## Cardiometabolic Health

Your heart and metabolism work together like a finely tuned machine — even if one facet of the mechanism falls out of alignment, it can have a detrimental effect on the entire system. This delicate balance, known as cardiometabolic health, represents the harmony between your cardiovascular system (heart and blood vessels) and your metabolism (how your body converts food and drink into energy).

Essentially, cardiometabolic health is a measure of your body's master control system that regulates blood sugar levels, blood pressure, cholesterol balance, body composition and energy utilization. It's the foundation that supports your daily energy, vitality and long-term health. In America, this foundation is shaking. (1) A 2018 study of about 55,000 US adults found that only 6.8% had optimal cardiometabolic health! Perhaps even more concerning is that major problems tend to develop silently over years before showing up as obvious symptoms.

However, given that there are so many factors affecting cardiometabolic health, many of which lie within our realm of control, there are many steps we can take to strengthen this foundation, improving our health and overall wellbeing.

### Controlling Cardiometabolic Health

#### **Movement Matters**

Bodies thrive on regular movement. Beyond structured or scheduled exercise, our daily activities have the capacity to make a positive impact on our cardiometabolic health. Taking the stairs, walking about while chatting on the phone, or even standing during the workday can all help. In other words, it doesn't boil down to just intense exercise. Instead, it's about avoiding long periods of inactivity and finding ways to incorporate natural movement throughout your day.

#### **Sleep: We All Need More**

Quality sleep isn't just about feeling rested; it's also fundamental to your metabolism. During sleep, your

body regulates hunger hormones, maintains healthy blood sugar levels, reduces inflammation and enhances recovery and repair. Poor sleep can disrupt these processes, making it harder to maintain healthy eating habits and energy levels. We all need more, so prioritizing consistent, quality sleep is one of the most powerful ways to support your cardiometabolic health.

#### **Mindful Eating**

Food is more than simple fuel — it's information telling your body how to function properly. Food provides the essential building blocks your body needs, breaking things down into macronutrients (proteins, carbohydrates and fats) and micronutrients (vitamins and minerals). The most beneficial foods for cardiometabolic health include:

- Colorful vegetables and fruits
- Whole grains and healthy fats
- Lean proteins

As a reminder, always limit or eliminate ultra-processed foods from your diet.

#### **Managing Stress**

Pulling the camera back, it's also worth noting that stress plays a crucial role in cardiometabolic health. Chronic stress can disrupt your body's balance by elevating blood pressure, affecting sleep quality, influencing food choices and increasing inflammation. Managing stress through regular relaxation practices, social connections and enjoyable activities isn't just good for your mind — it's essential for your metabolic health.

Timing matters as much as what you do. Maintaining consistent patterns in your eating and sleeping schedule helps optimize your body's natural rhythms. Try to keep regular meal times and sleep-wake schedules, and allow adequate time between dinner and bedtime to digest and prepare to rest.



### Make that Change

Improving cardiometabolic health doesn't require dramatic lifestyle overhauls like fad diets or rigorous gym routines. Instead, start with one small change, such as starting the day with low-fat yogurt, adding an extra vegetable serving at dinner or setting a consistent bedtime. Pay attention to how these changes make you feel. You'll find that good sleep makes it easier to make healthy food choices, and healthy food choices make good sleep easier. There is a definitive pattern at work here; regular movement also improves sleep quality while stress management supports better eating habits. Each positive change reinforces the others.

Remember that your cardiometabolic health, like a lot of things in life, is a journey, not a destination. Focus on progress rather than perfection. Choose one area to focus on this week, make small, sustainable changes, and build gradually on your successes. Every step you take, no matter how small, counts toward better health and vitality.

Your cardiometabolic system is remarkably resilient and responsive to positive changes. By understanding and supporting this intricate balance through mindful choices in movement, sleep and nutrition, you can create a foundation for lasting health and wellbeing.

## Additional Resources

Upcoming Wise & Well Webinar — Register Now!

**Topic:** Your Sleep Optimization Toolkit

**When:** Tuesday, March 11 | Noon – 1:00 p.m. ET



To register, **click here** or scan the QR code. For more information, view the **Employee Flyer**.

### References

(1) Trends and Disparities in Cardiometabolic Health Among US Adults, 1999-2018 | [pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)



# Monthly Moves

## Your Complete Guide to Heart-Healthy Exercises

If you're looking to boost your cardiovascular health, science shows that a well-rounded approach combining both cardio and strength training delivers the best results. The good news? You don't need to spend hours in the gym to see benefits. Here's your evidence-based movement prescription from leading health organizations:

### Your Weekly Cardio Goals

Choose the approach that fits your lifestyle:

- 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity (think: brisk walking, swimming, or cycling at a conversational pace) or
- 75 minutes of vigorous activity (such as jogging, tennis, or high-intensity cycling) or
- Mix and match both intensities throughout the week

### The Strength Component

Twice weekly, add resistance training to your routine:

- Target all major muscle groups
- Aim for 2-3 sets of 8-12 repetitions
- Use weights, resistance bands or bodyweight exercises

### Pro Tips for Success

- Break it up. Research shows that even 10-minute activity bursts count toward your weekly total.
- Start where you are. While 300 minutes of moderate activity weekly offers bonus health benefits, any movement is better than none.
- Listen to your body. Begin gradually and progress at your own pace.
- Stay consistent. It's better to do moderate amounts regularly than to overdo it occasionally.

### Source

NIH — Exercise, Physical Activity, and Cardiometabolic Health: Insights into the Prevention and Treatment of Cardiometabolic Diseases | [pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8920940/#S13](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8920940/#S13)



# Kale Breakfast Scramble

Start your day with this nutrient-packed scramble that combines eggs – a complete protein source – with kale, one of nature’s most powerful superfoods. While eggs were once controversial for heart health, current research shows they can be part of a heart-healthy diet.

The star of this dish, kale, is rich in potassium and fiber, both important for maintaining healthy blood pressure. The addition of tomatoes provides lycopene, an antioxidant linked to better heart health. This quick, satisfying breakfast keeps you energized while supporting your cardiovascular health.

## Ingredients

- 3 eggs
- 1 cup of kale, chopped
- 1/4 cup onion, diced or 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 5 cherry tomatoes, halved or a small diced tomato
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon salt-free seasoning



# Kale Breakfast Scramble

## Directions

1. Add oil to a frying pan. Turn heat to medium-low for about 2 minutes.
2. Add kale and onion to heated oil. Cook for a few minutes or until onions are clear. Remove from pan and set aside.
3. Turn heat to low. Add eggs to pan and scramble until barely firm.
4. Add the kale and onion mixture to the eggs. Mix gently.
5. Add the tomatoes.
6. Serve warm with toast or a tortilla.

Source: [heart.org](https://www.heart.org)

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## February Is Cardiometabolic Health Month

As winter wraps us in its embrace, February reminds us to focus on matters of the heart — and not just the romantic kind! With only about 7% of American adults having optimal cardiometabolic health, follow these tips to show your heart some love.

February 7

### Move More, Sit Less

Small movement changes add up! Take phone calls while walking, use a standing desk for an hour or park farther from entrances. Breaking up long periods of sitting is just as important as planned exercise.

February 14

### Sleep Smart

Quality sleep is your metabolic reset button. Focus on creating a consistent sleep schedule — even on weekends. Pro tip: Stop eating 2-3 hours before bedtime to help your body prepare for rest.

February 21

### Eat the Rainbow

Like our heart-smart breakfast scramble, build meals around colorful vegetables and lean proteins. Challenge yourself to add one new vegetable to your shopping cart this week. The more colors on your plate, the more nutrients you're getting!

February 28

### Stress Less, Live Better

Your heart and metabolism work best when you're relaxed. Try the "5-5-5" method: Breathe in for 5 seconds, hold for 5 seconds, exhale for 5 seconds. Do this whenever you feel stressed or before meals.



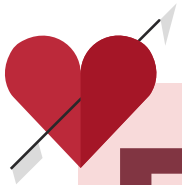
Send our Wise & Well Tips of the Week to your employees for quick, easily digestible health and wellbeing tidbits they can incorporate into their daily lives.

– Your Wise & Well Team

Source: [heart.org/en/healthy-living](https://heart.org/en/healthy-living)



Your cardiometabolic health thrives on smart nutrition and regular movement.



# For optimal health:



01

Fill your plate with colorful fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

02

Choose plant proteins and seafood.

03

Use liquid plant oils for cooking.

04

Minimize processed foods, added sugars and salt.

05

Keep alcohol moderate.

06

Stay active daily.