



Pump it up: Improving your **circulation**

Your body is filled with a superhighway of sorts. With your heart at the hub, veins, arteries, capillaries and other blood vessels provide a complex network that runs from head to toe. When it's all working smoothly, oxygen and nutrients travel freely.

Like on busy roads, things can go wrong to cause traffic. Detours and roadblocks can arise to compromise your circulation. Things like plaque buildup, blood clots, narrowed blood vessels and more slow down blood flow,¹ which can lead to greater problems.

What are the symptoms of poor circulation?



Pale or discolored skin¹



Cold hands or feet⁴



Cramping, achy muscles in legs, calves or feet¹



Numbness in arms and legs⁴



Recurring chest pains¹



Leg, ankle or foot swelling¹



Veins that bulge¹



Delayed or slow healing¹

The causes of poor circulation are varied and can be the result of everything from high blood pressure, diabetes and obesity to heart disease and more.¹ Many of these conditions can be treated with medications, but there are also changes you can make.

Changes you can adopt today

Stretch

Before and after any activity, stretch arms and legs. Flexing and extending ankles is especially helpful anytime.⁶

Increase your physical activity

Walking, swimming or biking can help improve your circulation.⁵

Elevate your legs

Rather than make our blood flow fight gravity, elevate your legs above your chest to give your veins a break.²

Wear graduated compression stockings

These keep blood from pooling and prevent leg swelling.²

Hydrate

Keep up your fluid intake to avoid dehydration. This is especially important when you sit for long periods.⁷

Adopt heart-healthy eating¹

Avoid overly processed foods and added sugars. Eat a variety of nutrient- and fiber-rich foods. Choose lean proteins and sources of omega-3 fatty acids.

Long-term changes

1

Maintain a healthy weight

Carrying extra pounds taxes your entire body.⁷

2

Quit smoking

Smoking damages blood vessels, causes heart disease and can cause blood clots.³

3

Schedule checkups

Regular medical exams keep you healthy.⁴

No one wants to be slowed down.

Following these suggestions can keep your blood flowing freely and you on the move.

Learn how Teladoc Health can help support you on your wellness journey.
To sign up or learn more, go to TeladocHealth.com/Smile.

¹<https://www.health.harvard.edu/diseases-and-conditions/decoding-poor-circulation>

²https://www.health.harvard.edu/a_to_z/varicose-veins-a-to-z

³<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/veins-are-a-key-player-in-the-body-heres-why-202311292997>

⁴https://www.health.harvard.edu/a_to_z/peripheral-arterial-disease-a-to-z

⁵<https://www.health.harvard.edu/heart-health/exercise-and-your-arteries>

⁶<https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/leg-stretching-may-improve-blood-flow-and-prevent-strokes>

⁷<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/leg-clots-aka-deep-vein-thrombosis-an-immediate-and-long-term-health-hazard-201112143955>