Lesson 2: Taking Your Pulse

Just like all your muscles, the heart needs exercise to become stronger and work better. Regular moderate activity helps you climb stairs and play with your children without running out of breath and getting tired. Taking your pulse (or heart rate) and the “talk test” are two ways to measure the intensity of aerobic or cardio physical activity.

### Taking your Pulse (or heart rate)

Use your index and middle fingertips to feel the pulse. The pulse can be felt on many places on your body, including:
- **Carotid artery** on the side of your neck
- **Radial pulse** on the inside of your wrist

### Intensity talk test

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<th>INTENSITY / TALK TEST</th>
<th>EXAMPLES</th>
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| When you do sedentary or light activities, you should be able to **sing** while doing the activity. | • Watching TV  
• Computer/video games  
• Talking on the phone  
• Housework |
| If you are doing moderate activities, you should be able to **carry on a conversation comfortably** while engaging in the activity. | • Walking  
• Light yard work  
• Light weight lifting  
• Stretching / Yoga  
• Dancing |
| If a person becomes winded or **too out of breath to carry on a conversation**, the activity they are doing can be considered **vigorous activity**. | • Jogging/running  
• Soccer, basketball, or volleyball  
• Heavy yard work  
• Swimming  
• High intensity aerobics |

Participating in at least **thirty minutes** of moderate to vigorous activity (see chart below) on all or most days of the week will improve heart health. Be sure to gradually warm up and cool down when doing activities that raise your heart rate.

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