

# *Personal Training by Robert J. Bovee*

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## **PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO THE FACTS ON BLOOD PRESSURE**

The American Heart Association reports that heart and vascular diseases are the primary causes of death in the United States. So it only makes sense that high blood pressure, a circulatory ailment, is a large hazard to one's health. When the heart pumps the blood through the arteries the blood is pressing against the walls of the blood vessels. This pressure on the walls of the arteries is what is known as blood pressure. During a lifetime, the heart will pump more than sixty million gallons of blood through over **600,000** miles of blood vessels. This pumped blood will provide two essential jobs to each and every cell of the body; **1)** it provides needed nutrients and **2)** it carries off waste products. The health of the heart and vessels depends on getting these two jobs done. If you have high blood pressure, your heart works harder to pump blood through out the body. This extra work placed on the heart can often lead to heart failure or stroke.

High blood pressure can be a result of one or many factors. Hypertension, another term for high blood pressure, can be genetically linked but is more often a combination of both inherited and environmental factors. Such environmental factors include excess body weight, poor diet, lack of physical activity, mental stress, smoking cigarettes, high salt intake, alcohol consumption, and high levels of caffeine from coffee or tea. Salty foods, for example, can make you thirsty so you drink more to quench your thirst. This excess fluid is retained to dilute the sodium component of the salt molecule. As a result of the extra fluid in the system the volume of blood will also rise. This then leads to an increase in blood pressure because there is more blood moving through the same vessels.

Hypertension afflicts an estimated **40 million** Americans. One problem with hypertension is that it does not have any forewarning symptoms. This is the reason for having your blood pressure checked as often as possible. A blood pressure reading is composed of two numbers, systolic and diastolic. The top number or systolic pressure represents the pressure in the vessels when the heart contracts. The bottom number or diastolic pressure is the pressure in the vessels when the heart is resting between beats. The American Heart Association says that a normal blood pressure reading is approximately **120/80**. A reading from **140/90 - 160/95** is borderline hypertensive. Any reading above **160/95** is considered hypertensive and one should see their doctor.

To reduce high blood pressure, we suggest that you try and remove the factors associated with it. If you are obese - begin to lose weight, if you are not active - begin to exercise, if stress is a problem - try meditation to help you to relax. Diet could have the most profound affect on controlling your blood pressure. Some helpful hints would be lowering your intake of foods high in fat and cholesterol, increasing fiber intake, and decreasing the amount of salty or processed foods.

For more information, contact Robert J. Bovee at **(585) 330-0614**.