



# The #below120/80 Challenge

## Week Two: Food and Exercise



Losing weight is an important first step to lowering your blood pressure. If you are overweight, losing as little as five to 10 pounds may help lower your blood pressure. This week's challenge will help you make smarter food choices and get active.

### Challenge Activity:

#### Start a food journal

Use a food journal to monitor the good choices you're making, correct course when you indulge and make smarter choices in the future. Document your eating and exercise habits with a food journal or free food tracking app:



Noom

([Google Play](#) | [App Store](#))



Fitness Pal

([Google Play](#) | [App Store](#))



Loselt:

[Loseit.com](#) ([online](#))

Discuss your food journal with your **Primary Care Physician (PCP)** and use the information to determine which eating and drinking habits you should improve.

### Why Track?

**Daily tracking provides a level of accountability** for what you are eating and gives you and your PCP a better understanding of your habits. It also helps identify if you are missing any important food groups, if you need more variety or need to re-evaluate your portion sizes.

### Eat Well

Replace one unhealthy eating or drinking habit with something healthier. Look for low-fat, low-sodium substitutes that also taste great. Consider trying the [Mediterranean diet](#) or the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet to help you better control your blood pressure. Check out the Mayo Clinic's [sample three-day DASH menu plan](#) to get started.



## Get Active

Add 30 minutes of physical activity at your target heart rate at least three times a week. If you currently work out, consider increasing your routine by 15 minutes per day. It is recommended that you exercise within 55 to 85 percent of your maximum heart rate for at least 20 to 30 minutes to get the best results from aerobic exercise.

[Learn how to calculate your target heart rate](#) and [why it's important](#).



Tip: Pressed for time? Split your activity into two 15-minute workouts at your target heart rate

## Continue Week One Challenge Activities



Keep up the **#below120/80** Challenge momentum by continuing to record your blood pressure numbers twice per day and taking at least one five-minute break for mindful exercise or quiet time every day.