

Do You Love Your Heart Enough? Find Out During American Heart Month

by [John Haffey](#) 02/03/2016 [lifestyle](#) Content Partner: [The Valley Hospital](#)



Dr. Gerald Sotsky. Photo Credit: *Contributed*

RIDGEWOOD, N.J. -- Just how much exercise is best for your heart? According to a new study by Valley Medical Group's partner Cleveland Clinic, the answer isn't so clear.

As February is American Heart Month and heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women, doctors such as Dr. Gerald Sotsky, Chair of Cardiac Services for Valley Medical Group, are encouraging people to listen to your heart. "Heart disease is largely preventable and controllable, and exercise is one of the keys to preventing heart disease," said Dr. Sotsky.

2.5 hours a week of moderate aerobic exercise is suggested by most doctors, however the new Cleveland Clinic survey shows only 20 percent of Americans know this target, and 40 percent are exercising less than the recommended amount.

Heart disease kills about 1 in 4 Americans, but many of these deaths can be prevented by simple lifestyle changes. Some simple ways to keep your heart pumping are:

- Exercise 30 to 60 minutes a day on most days of the week, such as taking a daily walk.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Quit or don't start smoking.
- Eat a diet that's low in saturated fat, cholesterol and salt.

"A little exercise can go far, potentially reducing the risk of dying from heart disease by as much as 40 to 50 percent." said Dr. Sotsky. "Almost everyone, with or without heart disease, should exercise. It improves blood flow, leads to lower blood pressure and will help you live longer."

Learn more about Valley's free [Cardiac Screening Program](#), which is designed to help individuals identify their personal risk for developing cardiovascular disease and to provide education on leading a heart-healthy lifestyle.

All month long, Valley will be posting heart healthy tips on its Facebook, so be sure to follow them [here](#).

Valley Health System is a regional cardiovascular affiliate of the Cleveland Clinic Heart & Vascular Institute — the No. 1 heart hospital in the country.

Dr. Gerald Sotsky is Chair of Cardiac Services for Valley Medical Group.

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