

Two Simple Ways to Lower Blood Pressure

6 MIN READ

SEP. 9, 2025

BY GREG PRESTO

New research shows that these two isometric moves can lower blood pressure in just minutes a week.

Cardio gets all the blood pressure-lowering love (and with good reason), but two humble isometric exercises can help you lower your blood pressure (even while streaming the latest episode of *Love is Blind*, or during an NFL halftime) without moving a muscle: Wall sits and hand gripper squeezes.

Why Isometric Exercises Lower Blood Pressure

When you contract your muscles during isometric moves, the blood vessels inside those muscles are briefly compressed. This challenges your cardiovascular system to push blood **more efficiently**. Over time, this repeated “pressure training” improves the flexibility and responsiveness of your blood vessels (called vascular compliance) and reduces the resistance that raises blood pressure. In other words, your heart learns to pump more effectively, and your arteries get better at expanding and contracting.

In studies of isometric exercise, the results have been surprisingly strong:

- ■ **Hand grip training:** This involves long, static holds of the hand grippers, and in **some studies**, results in drops of an average of 6.7 points for systolic blood pressure (the “top” number), and 4.8 points for diastolic (the bottom number) for people with hypertension.
- ■ **Wall sits (2016 study):** In

one study, wall sits even helped lower blood pressure in people with normal, healthy blood pressure: After four weeks of wall sits, the men who were studied saw dips of 4 mmHg for their systolic BP, and 3 mmHg for their diastolic.

Lowering BP can have big impacts on longevity: In **one study published by the American Heart Association journal *Hypertension***, scientists found that 50-year olds with normal blood pressure had life expectancies five years longer than those with hypertension.

Here's how the studies used these moves to lower BP, how you can easily incorporate them at home, and some tips on making the wall sits more manageable from Mike Nelson, Ph.D., adjunct professor at the Carrick Institute and founder of **Extreme Human Performance**, and **John Peel**, a trainer for iFit and Nordic Track.

Hand Grip Exercise: How to Do It

In **a study conducted during the COVID-19 lockdowns and published in 2025**, scientists assigned 15 hypertensive women (ages 30-45) to perform hand grip exercises three times per week for ten weeks, and compared their results with 15 hypertensive women who didn't do the hand grip exercise. At the end of the study, the grippers had dropped the "top" number of their blood pressure by five points, and the "bottom" number by two.

In each session, the grippers performed four rounds of isometric hand grips, each lasting two minutes. They rested two minutes between bouts of gripping. So each total session lasted 16 minutes.

One note: The grip doesn't need to be super, super intense. In this study, the women were only using a gripper that took 30% of their maximum strength to squeeze.

Try it: Grab two grippers. Hold each for two minutes. Rest for two minutes. Repeat

three more times.

Wall Sits: How to Do Them for Blood Pressure

In the wall sit study mentioned above, scientists had exercisers perform four wall sits of two minutes each, resting two minutes between each repetition. The men studied did this three times per week for four weeks. At the end of the study, the men had dropped both their systolic and diastolic blood pressure, despite already being in the “normal” range.

Here's how to do a wall sit:

1. **Stand with your back against a wall.** Walk your feet out slightly from the wall.
2. **Slide your back down the wall until your knees are bent around 90 degrees.** In this position, your lower back, upper back, and head should all be in contact with the wall. Your feet should be directly below your knees, so your knees form 90-degree angles.
3. **Brace your torso and maintain this position for the duration of the hold.** You can rest your hands on your legs, cross your arms, or let them hang at your sides.

When you're starting out with this move, focus on form to feel the burn in your quads and glutes, Peel says.

“Chest up, core tight, and heels grounded,” he advises. “Press your back flat against the wall, keep your shoulders relaxed, and make sure your knees are directly over your ankles, not jutting past your toes.”

Try it: A two minute wall sit is a tall order if you're not used to doing them, says Nelson. Depending on your preferences, he says, you can work up to this amount in one of two ways:

Option 1: If doing a five-second wall sit with your knees at 90 degrees feels like agony: Slide your butt slightly higher up the wall, Nelson says. In this position, the angle of your knees will be greater than 90 degrees.

As an additional help, Peel suggests placing an exercise ball between your back and the wall for extra comfort.

Perform holds here for two minutes each, resting two minutes between wall sits. Over time, work on dropping your butt lower and lower, until your knees make 90-degree angles.

Option 2: If you like the challenge of a 90-degree wall sit, but can't hold it for two minutes: Accumulate time with shorter sits instead, Nelson says.

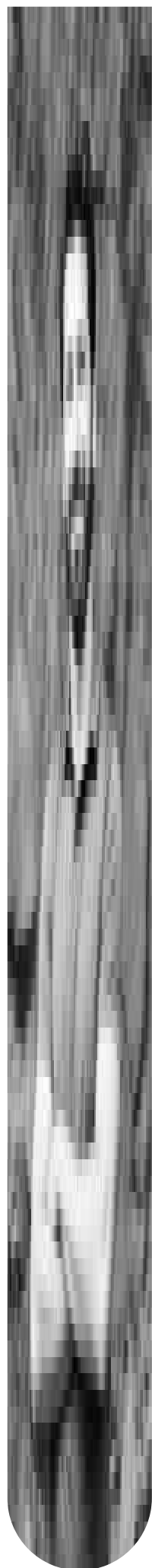
“You're basically doing a volume-equated method,” he says. Translation: Whether your holds are 5, 10, 20, 30, or 60 seconds long, you'll still want to do a total of eight minutes of wall sitting. Rest as needed between reps and, over time, build up the length of each hold, aiming for two minutes per hold.

Whichever method you choose, go for eight total minutes of wall sitting, three times per week.

Read This Next:

The information provided in this article is for educational and informational purposes only and is not intended as health, medical, or financial advice. Do not use this information to diagnose or treat any health condition. Always consult a qualified healthcare provider regarding any questions you may have about a medical condition or health objectives. [Read our disclaimers.](#)

WRITTEN BY:



Greg Presto