

This Could Be the Most Important Thing Men Read Today

As Christians, our bodies are “temples of the Holy Spirit, and God calls on us to offer our bodies as “living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God” (1 Cor. 6:19, Rom. 12:1). Many Christian men are careful to take great care of their bodies, but more men are not careful at all—lowering their energy, diminishing their capacity and, ultimately, shortening their lives. You’re determined to not be one of those people, otherwise you wouldn’t be reading this article. If you’re going to take a journey, you first have to know where you are. And if you’re on a journey to becoming healthier, your first step is to know your numbers.

Knowing your health numbers is important for all people, but because men are less likely to visit the doctor, fewer men know what their health numbers are or should be. This could be the most important thing men read today.

The University of Washington provides these screening guidelines specifically for men:

- Yearly: blood pressure and dental exam
- Every two years: eye exam and physical (yearly after age 50)
- Every three years: screen for diabetes (if BMI is above 25, then screen yearly)
- Every five years: test your cholesterol (more often if risk factors are present)

If you’re reluctant to go to the doctor, start with two numbers you can calculate at home: Body Mass Index and heart rate.

Body Mass Index

Body Mass Index, or BMI, is a simple, noninvasive method used to assess a person's weight relative to their height. While BMI may not be accurate for everyone, there is a consensus in scientific research that BMI is an accurate indicator of increased risk for obesity-related health problems for most individuals, including those who exercise.

Muscle is denser than fat, so individuals with a high muscle mass have an elevated BMI, but a lower health risk. For this reason, BMI should be considered in the context of other health metrics, including waist circumference and body fat percentage, as well as lifestyle choices to determine overall health risk.

Calculate your BMI using this BMI calculator. The recommended BMI range is 18.5 – 24.9. If you find your BMI is above this range, check out our Wellness Library Resources to support gradual weight loss.

Heart Rate

Resting heart rate is simply how many times the heart beats per minute while the body is at rest. This is best tested first thing in the morning before arising from bed. The average resting heart rate is 60-100 beats per minute while an athlete's resting heart rate may be as low as 40-60 beats per minute.

- Maximum heart rate: One's heart rate increases with exercise. Your maximum heart rate can be estimated by subtracting your age from 220.
- Target heart rate: The American Heart Association states that the target heart rate range for adult men is 50-85% of your max rate. Calculate your target heart rate range by multiplying your maximum heart rate by .50 and .85.

Understanding target heart rates is important for men's health. Maintaining or increasing active lifestyles can improve heart rate numbers. However, exercise and proper nutrition does even more for men's health.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), heart disease and cancer account for more than 47 percent of deaths in males in the United States. The good news for men is that regular doctor visits, knowing your numbers, consistent exercise and proper nutrition can improve a man's health and help to prevent or reverse these health concerns.

Consistently applied, these few steps have the potential to increase a man's lifespan. Talk to your doctor about other screenings that may be important for you based on your family and medical history.