

- Having an aortic aneurysm or dissection doesn't mean you can't exercise and be active. In fact, it's important to do so!
- Weight limits are commonly given to aortic disease patients but there is no data or evidence to support specific limits.
- Instead, a perceived exertion scale can be used to measure your effort.
- Before starting a new active or exercise work with your aortic care team to create an individualized plan based on factors specific to you.

People with a thoracic aortic aneurysm or dissection are often told a limit on how much weight they can safely lift by their medical provider. These can range from 10 pounds to no limit. You may have had the experience of asking two different doctors and receiving two different answers! This can be frustrating but happens because no evidence or data exists to base these numbers on. Doctors are using their previous experience and opinion to guide this recommendation, which can vary.

While we push for more research on this topic patients are left in the difficult position of navigating safety while exercising and exerting themselves in daily activities (for example at their job or with childcare). Most experts in aortic disease have moved from weight limit-based recommendations to using effort-based guidelines. Light weightlifting and low-intensity aerobic exercise are safe and likely improve both physical and mental health. Moderate intensity aerobic activity at least 3 to 4 days per week, 30 to 60 minutes per session is recommended. Intense isometric exertion that requires the Valsalva maneuver (the feeling of bearing down to lift something heavy or holding your breath for prolonged periods) are not recommended.

Exercise recommendations should be personalized to the individual and take into account aortic diagnosis, baseline physical activity, blood pressure control, other health conditions, age, genetic diagnosis and other factors. Before you start a new activity or exercise routine you should work with your aortic care team to create a plan that is safe for you and help you remain active throughout your life. If you are given a specific number of pounds as a weight limit, it is appropriate for you to ask the reasoning behind that recommendation.