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## What Are the Health Benefits of Baseball?

Playing baseball is a good way to get both vigorous and moderate exercise as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Heart Association. Baseball works many different muscle groups, especially the arms, thighs and lower legs. This sport also develops hand-eye coordination, quick thinking and reaction skills. Joining a team sport is an ideal way to make friends while at the same time getting a healthy dose of exercise. Running, catching, throwing and swinging a bat all provide tremendous strength and cardiovascular benefits for your whole body, as well as helping you burn a lot of calories.



### Cardiovascular Training

Any exercise that gets your heart pumping and your body sweating is a cardiovascular exercise. Cardio exercise strengthens your heart muscle and improves lung capacity. The CDC recommends that adults get 150 minutes (2 hours 30 minutes) of cardio exercise each week. Batters running the bases, outfielders running to catch a fly ball and catchers chasing a foul ball all get short bursts of cardiovascular exercise.

### Strong Arms

Swinging a baseball bat, throwing the ball and catching the ball are good ways to build arm strength and improve joint flexibility. Throwing the ball and swinging the bat involve all the muscles of the arms, including the biceps, triceps, and the muscles of the chest and shoulders. The rotator cuffs of the shoulders get a good workout with the twisting motions required for swinging the bat and throwing a ball.

### Strong Legs

Baseball recruits all of the major muscle groups in your legs. Moving carefully, throwing and squatting down to retrieve a ball engages your glutes, quadriceps, hamstrings and calf muscles. Running, in particular, is not only a good cardiovascular workout, but also ideal for toning and building up your leg muscles. Baseball often involves short bursts of running, such as base running after hitting the ball. Short bursts of running followed by a few minutes of rest while waiting for the next play help your muscles to recover between exertions. Catchers exercise their leg muscles by repeatedly squatting and lunging for balls.

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### Calorie Burn

According to MayoClinic.com, a person who weighs 160 pounds can burn 365 calories playing baseball for one hour. The more you weigh, the more calories you'll burn because your body has to work harder to perform that activity. For example, a person who weighs 200 pounds will burn 455 calories. Physical activity also boosts your metabolism to help your body burn calories all day long and reduces body fat. Baseball players also have to run a lot, especially during training sessions, which can burn more than 600 calories per hour of activity, according to MayoClinic.com. Swinging the bat, running the bases, catching the ball, and even walking to and from the dugout are physical exercises that can keep your metabolism revved up and burning calories.

