



## Home Blood Pressure Monitoring

The diagnosis of “hypertension” can be tricky. A certain number of in-office readings must be elevated in order to officially assign this diagnosis, and many factors can cause elevated in-office readings. Sometimes, your doctor will advise you to take and record your blood pressure (BP) values at home. This may aid in supporting or rejecting an official diagnosis, and/or be an extremely helpful tool in determining need for treatment or treatment efficacy.

The most important aspects of at home blood pressure monitoring are *timing*, *body position*, and *consistency*. Also crucial are having a reliable machine .. and remembering to log values in a safe place!

### Timing

The best way to time your at home blood pressure readings are: **twice/day, around 6:30 AM and 6:30 PM**. This is not always possible. Perhaps you're already on your way to work at that time of morning, or still there at that time of evening. Maybe you're still sleeping at 6:30 AM. If you're not awake and at home at both 6:30 AM and 6:30 PM, consult with your doctor to determine how you might adjust your BP monitoring schedule.



Blood pressure normally rises in the morning (it's what helps us wake up) and begins to fall in the evening as our bodies prepare for rest. Catching these values at these curves helps provide better insight into what blood pressure is doing, and when.

Before you take your blood pressure, give yourself **at least two but preferably five seated minutes to settle**. If you run upstairs to your bedroom, hurriedly throw on the cuff, sit on the bed, and grab a quick reading, your numbers might be higher than you'd like. Get in position, then relax for a few minutes before actually taking a reading.

### Body Position

To obtain the best BP reading, you want your body to be as relaxed and supported as possible. This looks like being **seated**, having the **back supported**, and keeping the **feet flat on the ground** (legs/ankles not dangling or crossed). Take your blood pressure on your **left arm** unless you have a medical reason for taking it on the right arm or elsewhere (your doctor can help you determine where to best measure BP). Keep the arm around **chest level and supported** so that your muscles can fully relax. Place the cuff **snugly against the skin** of the upper arm; avoid having clothing between your arm and the cuff. No part of the cuff should extend over the elbow. Line the "artery" line/arrow up with the front and center of your elbow crease. If your device comes with any other instructions, follow them.

**Get**  
**into position...**

**Sit back**

**Sit quietly**

**Feet on  
floor**



**No**  
**bulky/tight  
clothing**



**Rest** arm at  
**heart level**



### Consistency

How long you should continue self monitoring your blood pressure is individualized and should be discussed with your doctor. Within this time frame, though, it's important to miss as few readings as possible.

Other notes on taking blood pressure:

- If you're taking blood pressure lowering medications (pharmaceutical or herbal), take your blood pressure reading BEFORE taking these medications.
- Avoid caffeine and other stimulants for 30 minutes before measuring BP.
- Wait 30 minutes after eating a meal before taking BP.
- Empty bladder before measuring BP.

After all that, don't forget to **write down your BP values and keep them in a safe place!** You may choose to record them in a note or app on your phone, or on paper. Important pieces of a blood pressure log include date, time, BP reading(s), heart rate, emotion/stress level, and other notes. See the last page of this document for a sample log which you are welcome to print and use.

(Scroll to next page for BP log.)

*Images above from Google images.*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Blood Pressure</b>	<b>Heart Rate</b>	<b>Emotions / Stress</b>	<b>Other Notes</b>