

# Getting to Goal

## Being more active:

### Why exercise is so important for African Americans with high blood pressure.

*More than 50% of African-American women and 37% of African-American men are obese.<sup>1</sup> You are considered obese if you have a body mass index (BMI) of more than 30. BMI is a measure of body fat based on height and weight.<sup>2</sup> Exercise can help you lose weight which may help lower your blood pressure.<sup>3</sup>*

#### Getting Ready—What You'll Need to Start Exercising

Before you start exercising, you need the right equipment. You don't have to invest in a fancy machine or weight set. Use what you already have at home:

- Stair climber = run up and down the stairs
- Treadmill = walk around the block
- Weight set = cans filled with beans or milk jugs filled with sand

#### You do need a good pair of sneakers to support you while you work out. To find the right athletic shoe:<sup>4</sup>

- Pick the sneaker that fits your activity—running, basketball, tennis, or walking. If you're doing different sports, buy a cross-trainer.
- Get fitted late in the day, when your feet are biggest. They can swell a half shoe size between morning and afternoon.
- Give yourself wiggle room. Leave ½ inch between the end of your toes and the front of the shoe.
- Check that the back of the shoe is stiff and not easily bendable so it supports your heel.

#### Getting Started...Slowly

Jumping into your routine too quickly could lead to injury.<sup>5</sup>

- Start slowly with a five- to 10-minute warm-up. Walk slowly at first. Then increase your pace.
- At the end of your workout, cool down for about 10 minutes. Do a few gentle stretches to calm your breathing and slow your heart rate.
- Listen to your body. If you feel pain, dizziness, or shortness of breath, stop. Exercise should never be painful.

*(Over, please)*

*It's important to keep in mind that exercise does not need to be demanding in order to provide health benefits.<sup>3</sup>*

