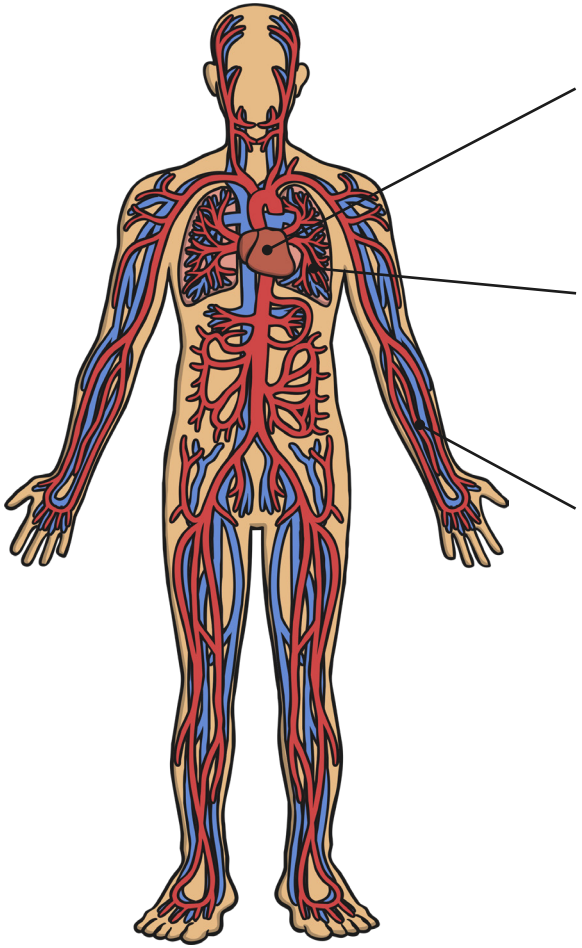
Functions of the Circulatory System



There are three main parts of the circulatory system – the heart, the lungs and the blood vessels.

Heart:

The heart plays an important role because it keeps all the blood flowing in the circulatory system. The process of exercising results in the body requiring more oxygen, this means that the heart has to circulate more oxygenated blood through the circulatory system. That is why your heart beats faster when you exercise.

Lungs:

When we breathe, we inhale air containing oxygen into our lungs. It is in the lungs that the gas exchange between oxygen entering the blood arteries and carbon dioxide exiting the veins occurs. The carbon dioxide is released by breathing out.

Blood Vessels:

Blood vessels are tubes that carry the blood around the body.

There are three main types of blood vessels:

Arteries – these carry oxygenated blood away from the heart to the rest of the body.

Veins – these carry deoxygenated blood back to the heart to be pumped to the lungs to become oxygenated.

Capillaries – these are blood vessels that connect to both arteries and veins. They are also connected directly to cells. Blood with nutrients and oxygen passes from the artery, through the capillary to a cell. Any waste is passed through capillary to the vein.