



HEALTH BENEFITS OF EXERCISE REPORT

STRUCTURED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY KEEPS OLDER ADULTS MOBILE



Loss of mobility among older adults is a risk factor for disability, hospitalization, chronic disease, and premature death. A study in the *Journal of the American*

Medical Association assessed the impact of structured physical activity programs on preserving mobility in older adults in multiple cities and communities over a two and a half year period. During the study, 1,635 adults at risk for loss of mobility were randomized to either a health education program or a structured, moderate intensity physical activity program. Exercises were conducted twice weekly at a center and three to four times weekly at home and mobility was measured by participants' ability to walk 400 meters.

The results showed that fewer participants in the physical activity group experienced both short term and persistent mobility disability over the course of the study. There was a slightly greater risk of adverse effects in the physical activity group compared with the health education group, but the authors still conclude that a structured, moderate intensity physical activity program can be beneficial in helping older adults at risk for disability preserve their mobility. Health clubs provide a safe, supportive environment for older adults to engage in moderate activity, and some clubs offer programs and services specifically for older adults.

SUPERVISED EXERCISE PROGRAMS CAN HELP PREGNANT WOMEN REDUCE DEPRESSION



Recent research indicates that depression is an issue not just following pregnancy, but also during. However, medical treatment for depression during pregnancy can be challenging due to possible risks to mom and baby. A study in the journal *Evaluation & The Health Professions* looked at the impact of a supervised physical activity program to reduce depression among pregnant women. The study followed 184 healthy pregnant women randomized to either an

exercise group who completed three 55-60 minute exercise sessions weekly throughout their pregnancy, and a control group who did not exercise.

The study found that fewer women in the exercise group experienced depression, with rates of 12.2% of the exercise group and 24.7% of the control group. The authors concluded that exercise reduces both the level and incidence of depression among pregnant women. Health clubs are a safe place for pregnant women to exercise during their pregnancies.

SUPERVISED EXERCISE PROGRAM IMPROVES FITNESS AMONG COLON CANCER SURVIVORS

Research shows that physical activity programs for cancer survivors can improve physical fitness and other health outcomes, but no studies have specifically looked at colorectal cancer survivors. A study in the journal *Applied Physiology, Nutrition, and Metabolism* followed a group of colon cancer survivors through a 12-week supervised exercise program to determine the feasibility and effectiveness of exercise programs for this population.



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Compared with baseline, participants saw improvements in markers of physical fitness including peak oxygen uptake, upper and lower body strength, waist circumference, and flexibility. The average adherence to the exercise program among the 29 participants was 91%, and the participants rated the program positively. The program was determined to be both feasible and effective. Health clubs provide a safe place for cancer survivors to continue exercising, and some clubs offer programs specifically for cancer survivors.

SOURCES

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