

Health Benefits of Exercise

Volume 16, Issue 5



TARGETED FITNESS PROGRAMS A SUCCESS FOR SENIORS



Fitness programs targeted to seniors have become increasingly popular. They provide seniors valuable benefits including access to customized group exercise classes, one-on-one training with knowledgeable staff, and a supportive, social environment for exercise. A recent article published in the journal *Population Health Management* reviewed data on a popular senior fitness program to assess its impact on the physical and mental health of older adults.

The study compared participants to other members of the same insurance policy, and found that the fitness group fared significantly better in physical and mental health, reporting more days of good health within a given year than non-participants. These findings suggest that group fitness programs specifically for seniors are a valuable strategy for improving quality of life and extending years of good health.

OBESITY AND INACTIVITY LEAD TO POORER HEALTH AMONG BREAST CANCER SURVIVORS

A new study published in the journal *Anticancer Research* looked at the effects of obesity and inactivity on the health and well-being of women shortly following breast cancer treatment. Researchers followed 537 women with breast cancer in an exercise program and measured their BMI, cholesterol, blood pressure, and blood sugar levels, presences of other chronic diseases, and quality of life.



According to the findings, breast-cancer survivors who exercised more and had a lower BMI were less likely to suffer from poor physical performance and cardiovascular disease. They also reported a higher quality of life. Health clubs provide a safe, supportive environment to help people get the physical activity they need to achieve or maintain good health.

IS WALKING OR RUNNING BETTER FOR YOUR HEART?



In recent years, walking has been promoted as a great way to start getting fit, and just 30 minutes per day of walking can produce benefits. However, there is still some debate about whether walking or running is better for heart health. Now, a study published this month compared exercisers burning equivalent amounts of energy from either walking or running to test if

one was better for preventing heart disease.

Researchers used data from two large observational studies of runners and walkers totaling over 40,000 adults over a 6-year time span. Data showed that both running and walking decreased risk-factors for heart disease: high cholesterol, diabetes, chronic heart disease (CHD), and hypertension. There were no significant differences in risk reductions between the groups. However, they did find that the more energy burned either walking or running, the greater the decrease was for risk of heart disease.

AEROBIC EXERCISE HELPS PREGNANT WOMEN MANAGE WEIGHT

While weight gain during pregnancy is normal and is associated with a healthy baby, too much weight gain can result in negative health impacts for both mom and baby. Studies have shown exercise to be safe for most expecting mothers, and a review looks at the impact aerobic exercise has on maternal weight management during pregnancy.

The researchers looked at 11 studies involving over 1,100 women. Results showed that aerobic exercise helped women better manage their weight, making exercise an effective tool for helping mothers-to-be achieve and maintain a healthy weight during their pregnancy.

WALKING TO SCHOOL IS GOOD FOR KIDS, STUDY FINDS



Fifty years ago many children walked to and from school, but today, many children get there by car or bus. A study in the recent issue of *Prevention Medicine* looks at whether or not walking or biking to get to school increases the likelihood that children meet physical activity guidelines recommendations.

The study followed 688 children as part of the Raising healthy Eating and Active Living in Alberta (REAL Kids Alberta) study. Children were given pedometers, and parents reported how children got to school. The findings showed that children who walked to school were more likely to achieve the recommended 13,500 steps per day than kids who did not.

Walking to school is particularly beneficial for kids living in urban areas, but more needs to be done to promote exercise among children in rural or suburban areas.

SOURCES

Harper, Michael. A Little Exercise Can Save Kids From A Lot Of Stress. RedOrbit.com. Accessible at <http://www.redorbit.com/news/health/1112799100/benefits-of-exercise-for-children-lower-stress-030713/>.

Elme A, Utriainen M, Kellokumpu-Lehtinen P, Palva T, Luoto R, Nikander R, Huovinen R, Kautiainen H, Järvenpää S, Penttinen HM, Vehmanen L, Jääskeläinen AS, Ruohola J, Blomqvist C, Saarto T. Obesity and physical inactivity are related to impaired physical health of breast cancer survivors. *Anticancer Res.* 2013 Apr;33(4):1595-602.

This newsletter has been brought to you by your health club, a member of the International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association. To learn more about the health benefits of exercise, visit HealthClubs.com today



Williams PT, Thompson PD. Walking Versus Running for Hypertension, Cholesterol, and Diabetes Mellitus Risk Reduction. *Arterioscler Thromb Vasc Biol.* 2013 Apr 4.

Lamina S, Agbanusi E. Effect of aerobic exercise training on maternal weight gain in pregnancy: a meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. *Ethiop J Health Sci.* 2013 Mar;23(1):59-64.

Pabayo R, Maximova K, Spence JC, Vander Ploeg K, Wu B, Veugelers PJ. The importance of Active Transportation to and from school for daily physical activity among children. *Prev Med.* 2012 Sep;55(3):196-200.