



HEALTH BENEFITS OF EXERCISE REPORT

WALKING LOWERS CARDIOVASCULAR RISK FACTORS



Walking has long been recognized as one of the simplest, most cost-effective ways to start exercising. A study published in *Prevention Medicine* examined the literature from several databases over 30 years to determine the effects of walking on cardiovascular health. Data for this study was pulled from 32 randomized controlled trials.

The authors found that walking increased aerobic capacity while decreasing blood pressure, weight, waist circumference, and body mass index. Walking did not have a lowering effect on blood lipid values. Walking has been a key component of public health efforts to increase physical activity and can be a great entry into an active lifestyle. Health clubs provide a safe, well-lit, and temperature-controlled place to get healthy by walking.

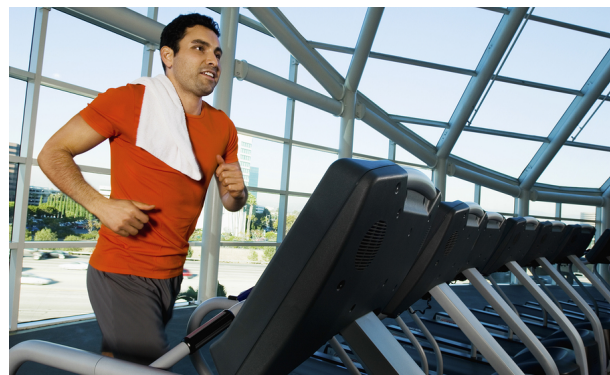
EXERCISE HELPS PREVENT DEPRESSION

The evidence for a link between exercise and mental health has been growing, but awareness is still needed in the medical and health communities. An article in the Hungarian psychiatry journal *Psychiatria Hungarica* discusses the impact of physical activity on the prevention and treatment of one of the most common mental health illnesses – depression.

Previous large scale reviews and analyses have found exercise to be associated with a reduction in moderate depression among various age and gender groups and that an active lifestyle is associated with lower levels of depression. As for clinical depression, physical activity is shown to be an effective prevention strategy causative of lower depression levels. In addition, randomized controlled trials show clear benefits of engaging in exercise, similar to those of psychotherapy interventions.

Health clubs provide a supportive, engaging environment for people with or at risk for depression to be physically active.

HIGH INTENSITY TRAINING IMPROVES CARDIOMETABOLIC HEALTH MORE THAN MODERATE INTENSITY TRAINING



The debate regarding high intensity training versus moderate intensity training is ongoing. A study in the German journal *Deutsche Medizinische Wochenschrift* aimed to determine the effect of high intensity training versus moderate intensity training on cardiovascular risk. High intensity training involved running above the anaerobic threshold, and moderate exercise consisted of running at approximately 65% of maximal heart rate. Both resulted in similar caloric expenditure. The study included 81 untrained men and lasted for 16 weeks.

The results of the study showed that improvements to VO2max and left ventricular mass index (a measure that can potentially indicate heart disease) were greater among participants in high intensity versus moderate intensity exercise. The moderate intensity exercise group lost more body fat, as well as more lean muscle. Both moderate and high intensity groups saw similar improvements in metabolic syndrome risk. The authors concluded that high intensity interval training impacts cardiovascular health more favorably than moderate intensity exercise, although it is important to note that both are beneficial.

SOURCES

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