

# Health Benefits of Exercise

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## EXERCISE PRESCRIPTIONS AND QUALITY SERVICES HELP GET BARIATRIC PATIENTS MOVING



Weight loss surgery involves any number of surgical procedures that alter the size or shape of the stomach to produce long-term weight loss.

Research has shown that, in addition to the necessary dietary changes, exercise

can help people who have undergone weight loss surgery keep off more weight. A study in the journal *Obesity Surgery* looked at the challenges and positive influences that affect a patient's exercise behaviors following weight loss surgery.

They found that the most common barriers were self-motivation, lack of time, physical issues relating to surgery, and coexisting chronic conditions. Some positive influences reported included benefits from an exercise prescription and access to quality facilities. Health clubs have a unique opportunity to provide safe, supportive environment to people who have undergone weight loss surgery. In fact, according to the study's authors, "participants cited the benefit of community-based facilities, so [healthcare] providers might consider partnering with local professionals to deliver exercise services."

## YOGA IMPROVES BALANCE AND MOBILITY IN OLDER ADULTS



Exercise has been shown to improve balance and mobility and possibly prevent falls among older adults, but yoga as an

exercise intervention for older adults has not been widely studied. A new study in the *Journals of Gerontology* looked at the feasibility and impact of a 12-week yoga program on balance and mobility in older people.

The study followed 54 adults living in the same community as they completed 12 weeks of twice weekly yoga focused on standing postures. They also had a control group that did not do yoga. The researchers found that the yoga group significantly improved their standing balance, and were able to move from a sitting position to a standing position faster than the control group. These findings suggest that yoga can help older adults improve balance and mobility, but more research is needed to determine the impact of yoga on falls. Many health clubs offer a range of levels, styles, and types of yoga classes as part of membership.

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND WEIGHT LOSS PROGRAM REDUCE BODY FAT IN OBESE SENIORS



A study in the latest issue of the journal *Obesity* looks at the long-term effects of weight loss and physical exercise on body composition of older adults, and how BMI changes affect one's risk of

heart disease. During the study, 288 overweight older adults received either a weight loss counseling and exercise program, an exercise program only, or a general health education class.

The weight loss counseling and exercise group saw more significant changes in fat composition than the other two groups. They lost three times as much weight as the exercise and general education groups, and maintained a higher lean mass ratio. Fat loss was associated with improvements in heart disease risk factors and reduced overall body weight was linked to improvements in mobility. These findings suggest that moderate exercise in the absence of a weight loss program did not reduce body weight or cardiometabolic risk factors in overweight, older adults. Many health clubs offer weight loss or weight reduction programs.

## SUSTAINED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY THROUGH ADULTHOOD MAY HELP REDUCE STROKE RISK

Blood flow to the brain and the brain's reactivity to carbon dioxide are two known stroke risk factors that can be improved by exercise. A study in the journal *Stroke* looks at the effect of sustained exercise through the lifetime on improving these risk factors.

During the study, men were grouped into one of four groups based on their age and lifetime activity levels, with the most active group averaging over 150 minutes per week of activity and the least active group averaging none. Results showed that the most

active group was able to prevent some of the age related decline in cerebral blood flow and improve other markers of stroke risk compared to their less active peers. These findings illustrate the importance of maintaining physical activity throughout one's lifetime. Health clubs are safe, supportive places for all ages to engage in regular activity.

## WALKING AND RUNNING REDUCE PREMATURE DEATH FROM BRAIN CANCER



A study in *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise* reviewed nearly 12 years of data on over 11,000 runners and 42,000 walkers from the

National Runners' and Walkers' Health Studies to assess the effect of exercise on lowering brain cancer risk.

The results showed that exercise in the form of both running and walking reduced participants' risk for brain cancer, and there was little difference in risk between runners and walkers. The study demonstrated that the risk of premature death from brain cancer dropped 43.2% for people who exercised more than 1.8 metabolic equivalents (METs) per day and 39.8% for those who exercised more than 3.6 METs per day compared to those who exercised less than 1.8 MET per day. To compare, working at a desk expends 1.8 METs, moderate paced walking 2.6 METs, a fast walk 3.6 METs, and running 7 METs. Health clubs are a great place to continue walking or running indoors.

### SOURCES

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