

# Health Benefits of Exercise

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## PHYSICALLY ACTIVE MOMS MORE LIKELY TO HAVE ACTIVE, CONFIDENT ADOLESCENT DAUGHTERS



Evidence suggests that physical activity among American youth dropped by 75 percent between the ages of 9 and 15. In many cases, declines in physical activity have a disproportionate impact on girls, meaning many

girls to become less active during adolescence. A recent study published in the *Journal of Physical Activity & Health* looked at the relationship between active and supportive mothers and physical activity in adolescent girls. Researchers surveyed 210 girls, aged 11-12 years, to find a correlation between their mothers' physical activity habits and with their self-esteem, confidence in performing physical activity, and motivation to exercise

They found that girls who felt their moms were supportive of an active lifestyle reported higher confidence and greater intent to exercise in the future. In addition, girls who reported having moms and dads who were physically active had more confidence in themselves and their ability to be active. These

findings illustrate the importance of parental support in promoting physical activity among adolescent girls. Many health clubs offer a supportive environment for families to exercise together.

## REGULAR EXERCISE MAY REDUCE THE RISK OF OVARIAN CANCER



Research has shown that exercise may reduce the risk of certain cancers – like breast and prostate cancer. Now, a study has found an association between daily exercise and reduced risk of ovarian cancer.

The study surveyed 500 Chinese women hospitalized for ovarian cancer, as well as 500 women who were cancer free, about their physical activity habits. The results, published in *Prevention Medicine*, found that the cancer free group reported significantly higher daily levels of strenuous and moderate physical activity than the women with ovarian cancer., and that increased leisure time activity is associated with a reduced risk for ovarian cancer, after adjusting for other factors. Women should get at least 30 minutes of moderate or 15 minutes of vigorous activity 5 days a week, and health clubs provide a convenient, supportive environment for women to be active.

## STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES HAVE WEIGHT LOSS BENEFITS FOR WOMEN



According to the American Psychological Association, 75% of Americans report having moderate or high stress levels within the last month. Stress can contribute to obesity through its impact on hormone levels and eating habits. A new study in Greece found that stress management practices may improve weight loss outcomes among obese women. The study followed 34 women who were assigned to a stress management program or a control group. At the end of the 8-week program, the women in the stress management group saw a significant improvement in weight loss and had adopted healthier eating habits, despite a minimal difference in reported stress levels. Previous research has shown that exercise can be a helpful tool for managing stress and augmenting weight loss.

## EXERCISE AND HEALTHY EATING IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR BREAST CANCER SURVIVORS

Breast cancer survivors often try to adopt healthier eating and exercise habits to improve their health and prevent cancer recurrence. A recent study looked at the impact of proper diet and regular exercise on quality of life in breast cancer survivors.

Researchers surveyed 100 breast cancer survivors about their diet and exercise habits, and found that over 60% of women ate moderate to healthy diets, 22% engaged in moderate exercise, and 65%

engaged in low-intensity exercise regularly. Women with healthy eating habits reported better quality of life and greater social, emotional, and cognitive function, while women with higher levels of activity reported better emotional and cognitive function. These findings suggest that healthy eating and physical activity can improve quality of life in breast cancer survivors and should be encouraged by health care professionals. Health clubs provide a supportive environment and numerous resources to help cancer survivors adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles.

## EXERCISE PROGRAM IMPROVES HEART DISEASE RISK FACTORS AMONG OVERWEIGHT COLLEGE STUDENTS



Obesity and cardiovascular disease rates are increasing among overweight, college-aged women. A recent study found that weekly exercise classes could reduce many of the known heart disease risk factors prevalent in this group.

The study, conducted at a university in South Africa, followed 60 overweight, sedentary women through a ten-week exercise program. Participants attended an hour-long Tae Bo class three times each week. After ten weeks, women saw a significant improvement in weight, BMI, waist and hip circumference, blood sugar, cholesterol levels, and blood pressure. Tae Bo and other fitness classes provide a fun, social environment to start exercising and can be found at most health clubs.

## SOURCES

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