

Health Benefits of Exercise

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PHYSICALLY ACTIVE COLLEGE STUDENTS HAVE HIGHER SELF ESTEEM



Physical activity has been shown to improve quality of life among several population groups, including older adults and cancer survivors, with effects depending on factors like self-esteem and self-efficacy (the belief in one's ability to perform a behavior such as exercise). Now, a study in the journal *Quality of Life Research* looked at the impact of physical activity on quality of life among college students.

Researchers surveyed nearly 600 undergraduates about their leisure time exercise habits and quality of life and found that physical activity positively affected exercise self-efficacy, physical self-esteem and mood. According to the responses, physical self-esteem had the most influence on quality of life. These findings suggest that programs to promote physical activity among college students can be effective in improving their quality of life, and of course, their health.

HIGHER INTENSITY AEROBICS BENEFIT OLDER ADULTS FOLLOWING A HOSPITAL DISCHARGE



Following a hospital discharge, older adults may be given a general home-based exercise program, usually consisting of low intensity exercises like walking. However, a new study in the *Journal of the American Geriatric Society* compares the benefits of higher intensity aerobic intervals – involving endurance, strength, and

balance exercises - compared to home-based exercise.

Researchers studied 115 older adults, aged 70-92, who had a chronic disease and were recently discharged from the hospital. One group performed lower intensity (or home-based) exercise and the other group performed high intensity aerobic exercises designed to build endurance, strength and balance. To gauge changes researchers compared the before and after results of each participants Senior Fitness Test, which involves chair stands, arm curls and a 6-minute walk.

Both groups saw improvement in health related quality of life and physical activity after 3 months, but the improvements on the Senior Fitness Test were significantly greater in the aerobics group. These results suggest that exercise is beneficial for older adults following a hospital admission and should be incorporated into treatment. Health clubs offer a safe, supportive environment for older adults to begin an exercise program following a hospital stay.

HIGH BLOOD SUGAR CAN INCREASE RISK OF DEMENTIA, EVEN WITHOUT DIABETES



Scientists know that diabetes can increase the risk for developing dementia, but it is unknown whether blood sugar levels that are high but not high enough for diabetes can also increase the risk of dementia. To answer this question, researchers followed over 2,000 people with and without diabetes and took multiple measures

of blood glucose levels as part of the Adult Changes in Thought Study.

The results, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, showed that higher than average glucose levels in the absence of diabetes in the previous 5 years was associated with an increase in risk of dementia. Among those with diabetes, higher glucose levels also increased the risk of dementia. Physical activity has been shown to decrease blood glucose levels, and health clubs provide a supportive environment for new exercisers to begin physical activity.

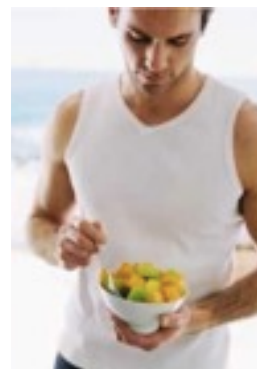
EXPECTANT MOTHERS SHOULD DISCUSS EXERCISE WITH THEIR DOCTORS

An abundance of research has shown that regular, moderate intensity exercise can benefit both mother and baby during pregnancy for most women. However, little is known about how often obstetricians are discussing exercise with their

patients. A study in the *Journal of the American Osteopath Association* looked into the association between doctors discussing exercise and other healthy habits, like not smoking and good nutrition, with their patients and patient health behaviors.

The study surveyed over 200 pregnant women and 31 obstetricians at multiple offices throughout the US and found that women who reported paying attention to healthy eating habits and women who discussed exercise with their obstetrician during pregnancy were more likely to continue or increase exercise during pregnancy. These findings highlight the importance of doctors discussing exercise and other healthy habits with their patients during pregnancy.

FREQUENT SNACKING DOESN'T NECESSARILY LEAD TO WEIGHT LOSS



In recent years, eating smaller meals and snacks more frequently – 5-6 times per day compared to 3 square meals per day – has been touted as a plan to help with weight loss.

However, there is no consensus among experts whether eating more often frequently helps with weight loss. A study in *Public Health Nutrition* looked at data from over 6,000 people in Switzerland to assess the links between frequency of snacking and other factors like body mass index (BMI), lifestyle habits, and demographics.

The research found that snacking frequency was not associated with BMI, and that snacking occurred in the context of both healthy and unhealthy eating habits and lifestyles. In addition, they found that women were more likely to choose healthier snacks like fruit while men were more likely to choose snacks on the less healthy side.

This evidence indicates that, instead of advising a specific number of snacks per day, professionals should encourage clients to eat healthy foods, listen to hunger cues, and practice other healthy behaviors like eating breakfast and exercising.

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