

Health Benefits of Exercise

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COMMUNITY BASED EXERCISE IMPROVES QUALITY OF LIFE IN PEOPLE WITH CANCER



Short-term studies have shown that exercise has some benefits for people with cancer. Now, an article in the recent issue of the *Journal of Oncology Practice* looked at the outcomes of a community based exercise program on quality of life in people with cancer. The researchers used data from the FitSTEPS for Life Exercise Program, which followed 177 participants diagnosed with various types of cancer for five years.

Analysis showed that participants in the program saw improvements in physical and social function, emotional health, mental health, and general health. These improvements were noted after several months and lasted for the five-year period. This research reveals an opportunity for health clubs, which may be more effective in engaging and retaining members with programs and other offered amenities.

MILD PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IMPROVES BLOOD GLUCOSE IN OLDER, DIABETIC WOMEN



Physical activity is an important part of diabetes management, with benefits including weight loss and decreased blood sugar levels. However, some older adults with diabetes may

experience difficulty moving around, making exercise challenging. A new study looked at whether recommending 5 minutes of walking every hour for most waking hours would be more feasible and beneficial than the usual recommendation to exercise 30 minutes per day.

During the study, 9 patients with type 2 diabetes were encouraged to exercise in small, 5 minute increments over 6 months, and were compared with 9 other diabetics who received normal recommendations. After 6 months, both groups had lost weight, but the group who exercised in smaller doses had significantly improved blood glucose levels compared to the other group. These results indicated that encouraging small, frequent bouts of light intensity exercise can improve the health of people with diabetes and poor mobility.

GROUP BASED EXERCISE AND LIFESTYLE PROGRAMS CAN PREVENT DEPRESSION IN PEOPLE WITH CHRONIC DISEASE



The Healthy Eating and Exercise Lifestyle Program is a nutrition and exercise program for people with heart disease and type 2 diabetes. The program involves supervised group exercise sessions twice a week and five information sessions over 16 weeks. A study, published in the *European Journal of Preventive Cardiology*, looked at the program's impact on depression symptoms and participants' ability to meet recommended levels of physical activity (at least 15 minutes per week).

Results showed that program participants were less likely to report symptoms of depression and more likely than non-participants to meet exercise recommendations for frequency, duration, and intensity. In addition, those who met exercise recommendations were less likely to be depressed. These findings indicate that group supported exercise can improve depression symptoms and increase habitual exercise, even in the presence of multiple chronic disease factors.

PILATES HELPS REDUCE PAIN FOR WOMEN WITH OSTEOPOROSIS

Pilates is a type of conditioning that focuses on strengthening arm, hip, abdominal, and leg muscles. Pilates is designed to improve core stability and strength, balance, and alignment. Now, research is showing that Pilates can be beneficial for women with osteoporosis.

Participants were divided into two groups. The first group completed two Pilates classes per week for one year, and the second group completed twice weekly sessions of basic core exercises at home, also for one year. Results showed that the Pilates group saw significant improvements in pain, physical function, and quality of life. The basic exercise group saw improvement as well, but to a significantly lesser extent than the Pilates group. Pilates may have been more effective because classes offer accountability, expert advice, and social opportunities. Pilates is offered as a group class at many health clubs in the US and worldwide.

TOO MUCH SITTING AND PHYSICAL INACTIVITY INCREASE RISK FOR HEART DISEASE FOR WOMEN



According to data from the Women's Health Initiative Observation Study – a long term study of over 71,000 women – sitting for long periods coupled with low levels of physical activity significantly increases the risk for developing cardiovascular disease. Women reported time spent sitting and physical activity levels, and were followed for 12 or more years. The results showed that women who sat for more than 10 hours per day had a higher risk of cardiovascular disease, including heart attack and stroke, than women who sat for less than five. Women reporting low levels of physical activity were also at higher risk. In addition, women who sat for over 10 hours daily and reported low levels of physical activity had the highest risk for heart disease.

While many jobs now involve more sitting time, women should move during the day and engage in regular physical activity before and/or after work to reduce the risk of heart disease.

SOURCES

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