

# Health Benefits of Exercise

Volume 17, Issue 1



## PILATES MAY IMPROVE PAIN AND QUALITY OF LIFE IN CHILDREN WITH ARTHRITIS



Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA), also known as Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis (JRA) is a type of arthritis that occurs in children under the age of 16 and causes swelling, joint pain, stiffness, and loss of motion. A new study in the journal *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation* found that Pilates training can help reduce pain and improve quality of life in children with JRA.

The study followed 50 children with JRA, half of whom were referred to a basic exercise program, and half of whom were referred to a Pilates training program, for 6 months. After 6 months, the Pilates group reported higher physical and social quality of life than did the basic exercise group, although both saw some improvement. The Pilates group also saw improvements in joint pain and range of motion. Many health clubs offer Pilates as part of their group exercise programming.

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROGRAM LINKED TO REDUCED PHYSICIAN VISITS IN INACTIVE PATIENTS

Research indicates that promoting exercise could save on health care costs, including physician visits. However, it is often challenging to sustain increases in physical activity over the long term, which is necessary to reducing costs. Now, a study in *PLoS One* shows that a 3-month exercise program can reduce physician visits over the following year among inactive patients.

Researchers studied two groups of people. The first group participated in a 3-month exercise program and was referred to additional exercise resources in the community, while the second group received the standard care provided by physicians. One year later, the exercise group had significantly reduced their visits to the physician, while the other group saw no change. This suggests that an exercise program can help reduce healthcare use among inactive people.

## GROUP EXERCISE HELPS REDUCE LOW BACK PAIN

Many people in the US and around the world suffer from low back pain. A recent study published in *European Spine Journal* looks at the effect of group exercise in a private, community based facility on pain and disability in people suffering from back pain.

The results showed that after 6 months, participants noticed marked improvements in pain intensity levels and reported disability. These improvements were maintained at 12-month follow up. Health clubs offer a supportive environment for people with low back pain to begin exercising.

## EXERCISE AND WEIGHT MANAGEMENT IMPROVES HEALTH IN OBESE PEOPLE WITH CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE



Weight management is important for people with Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD), as obesity may accelerate kidney damage. A study in the *Journal of Renal Nutrition* looked at the effect of a diet and exercise based weight management program on kidney disease symptoms in people with CKD.

The study followed 38 CKD patients through a 2 month long program aimed at reducing weight and exercising more. After the program, those who had lost the target amount of weight – around 3% of their body weight – saw significant improvements in their blood pressure, lipid profiles, and other kidney disease markers. They also saw greater improvement in aerobic endurance (measured by an 800-meter running test), better abdominal strength and endurance, and greater flexibility. Many health clubs offer weight management programs to their members and people in the community.

## EXERCISE REDUCES FATIGUE IN PEOPLE WITH MS



Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a degenerative nerve disease affecting the brain and spinal cord. Symptoms include muscle weakness, balance and coordination problems, numbness or prickling sensations, and cognitive and memory problems. A review published in the journal *Psychosomatic Medicine* shows that exercise may help reduce fatigue in people with MS. The review analyzed 17 studies including over 500 patients between 1960 and 2012. The authors concluded that exercise training had a small but significant impact on reported fatigue in people with MS. Health clubs provide a safe, supportive environment for exercise for people across the health spectrum.

### SOURCES

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