



# HEALTH BENEFITS OF EXERCISE REPORT

## PRESCRIBING EXERCISE IN THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE LEADS TO IMPROVED MEASURES OF HEART HEALTH



Physical Activity Guidelines recommend 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise per week for healthy adults. Many interventions

target higher intensities of exercise, but a study in the journal *The Physician And Sports Medicine* examined the impact of prescribing changes in physical activity levels at low, moderate, and high intensity in the physician's office. The study included sixty older adults (aged 55-75 years) who were assigned to one of four groups depending on intensity of exercise targeted or a control group. Researchers analyzed clinical measures like body composition, blood pressure, and aerobic fitness as well as lab values to assess heart health.

Results showed that participants who changed their exercise behavior saw improvements in both clinical measures and blood lab values. This means that exercise prescribed through the physicians' office can improve cardiometabolic health in older adults. Health clubs offer a safe, supportive place for older adults to be active, and many clubs are now offering specific programs for those referred by a physician.

## EXERCISE LATE IN LIFE DELAYS COGNITIVE DECLINE

It has been well reported that exercise can delay cognitive decline late in life, however little is known about the impact of exercise on cognitive health independent of other factors like cognitive stimulation and social interaction. A study published in *Prevention Science*, the official journal for the

Society of Prevention Research, assessed the impact of late life exercise on cognitive health, and how duration, frequency, and intensity of exercise influence outcomes. During the study, researchers analyzed data on over 1,200 people who were 70 years or older in 1999 from national surveys conducted in 1999, 2003, and 2007.

Results showed that participants who were more active during their leisure time had better cognitive function over time and a slower rate of cognitive decline. In addition, duration of exercise was the only other factor that was predictive of cognitive function, with adults who were active at least 30 minutes per bout of exercise were most likely to reduce the risk of cognitive decline. According to the authors, "this research supports the case for physical exercise programs for older adults in order to help prevent loss of cognitive function."

## FOCUS GROUP: EXERCISE IMPROVES PERCEIVED WELLNESS AMONG WOMEN WITH BREAST CANCER



Breast cancer treatment often comes with the risk of diminished wellness. A study in the journal *Cancer Nursing* used focus groups to assess the impact of exercise on perceived physical and

psychological wellness among women undergoing chemotherapy treatment for breast cancer.

The researchers noticed three themes emerge from the focus groups relating to exercise: exercise influenced feelings of physical, psychological, and social wellness. Women reported feeling psychologically stronger, felt that their upper body strength had improved, and reported more social support and interaction with exercise.

These results suggest that exercise could help restore feelings of wellness during breast cancer treatment, in addition to improving daily functioning and other benefits associated with exercise. Health clubs provide a safe, supportive place for women with breast cancer to exercise.

## SOURCES

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