

Newsletter

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Regular Exercise Shows Benefits - Even After Sedentary Lifestyle

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The benefits of exercise have been well-documented over the years. Numerous studies have shown that exercise can help reduce incidences of disease, promote weight loss, and improve mental health. A recent study set out to examine if exercise during the senior years has benefits in people who were previously sedentary.

Canadian researchers investigated two groups of previously sedentary healthy adults, ages 55-75 years at baseline. One group remained sedentary during the study, while the other group initiated and engaged in regular exercise consisting of 30- to 45-minute aerobic sessions, three times a week, for a minimum of 46 weeks a year over the 10-year study period. Investigators evaluated the participants for fitness levels, metabolic risk factors for cardiovascular disease, and comorbid conditions.

At the conclusion of the study, researchers examined data for 161 participants in the active group and 136 participants in the sedentary group. According to the study, "The active group showed a significantly lower prevalence (11%) of the metabolic syndrome than the sedentary group (28%) at 10 years." The sedentary group also had a 13% decrease in fitness over the 10-year study period, while the exercise group showed a small increase in fitness levels. HDL, or "good" cholesterol, showed a 9% increase in the exercise group, compared to the sedentary group that showed an 18% decrease in HDL. The active group also had "fewer comorbid conditions, and fewer signs and symptoms of cardiovascular disease," than their sedentary counterparts.

Petrella RJ, Lattanzio CN, Demeray A, et al. Can adoption of regular exercise later in life prevent metabolic risk for cardiovascular disease? *Diabetes Care* 2005;28:694-701.