

MEDIA ADVISORY

IDEA Health and Fitness Reveals the 25 Most Significant Health Benefits of Physical Activity and Exercise

[IDEA Health & Fitness Association](http://www.idealife.com) (www.idealife.com), the world's leading membership organization of health, wellness and fitness professionals with more than 21,000 members in over 80 countries, reveals the 25 most significant health benefits of exercise and physical activity in the latest issue of *IDEA Fitness Journal*.

People of all ages can improve the quality of their lives as well as reduce the risks of developing ailments such as coronary heart disease, hypertension (high blood pressure), some cancers and type 2 diabetes with ongoing participation in some form of moderate physical activity and exercise. Daily exercise also will enhance mental wellbeing and promote healthy musculoskeletal function throughout a lifetime. In addressing "The 25 Most Significant Health Benefits of Physical Activity & Exercise," IDEA covers some of the most common health issues along with research and advice on how they can be positively affected, prevented or controlled by engaging in some type of consistent exercise.

No. 1: Cardiovascular disease: Long-term participation in some form of cardiovascular exercise will lower risks of the leading health-related cause of mortality among men and women.

Nos. 2-4: Diabetes, insulin sensitivity and glucose metabolism: Regular aerobic exercise helps meaningfully increase insulin sensitivity and glucose metabolism while resistance training and aerobics can play a strong role in the prevention of non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus.

No. 5: Hypertension (high blood pressure): Moderate intensity aerobic exercise, performed three-to-five times per week for 30-60 minutes per session, appears to be effective in reducing elevated blood pressure.

Nos. 6-8: Blood Triglycerides, HDL Cholesterol ("good" cholesterol) and LDL Cholesterol ("bad" cholesterol): Research shows that 15-20 miles per week of jogging, biking or brisk walking may decrease blood triglycerides while the same threshold of exercise has been shown to elevate HDL-C (the "good" cholesterol).

No. 9: Stroke: Statistics show that those who are moderately active have a 20% lower risk of stroke while those who are highly active have a 27 percent lower risk (Sacco, et al., 2006).

Nos. 10-13: Colon, Breast, Lung and Multiple Myeloma Cancers: Physically active men and women have a 30-40 percent reduction in relative risk for colon cancer compared with their inactive counterparts. Although more research is needed, it appears physically active individuals have a lower risk of lung cancer (Lee, 2003). Meanwhile, patients of multiple myeloma cancers who walk three-to-five days per week for 15-to-30 minutes and do light resistance exercises have demonstrated an increased overall quality of life (Roberts-McComb, 2007).

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No. 14: Osteoporosis: In order to preserve bone health during adulthood, physical activities that stimulate bone growth are recommended, including weight-bearing endurance activities three-to-five times per week and resistance exercise two-to-three times per week for a total of 30-to-60 minutes of exercise per day (Kohrt, et al., 2004).

Nos. 15-16: Musculoskeletal Health and Sarcopenia: Muscle mass, strength, power and endurance are essential contributing factors for ensuring musculoskeletal health and movement capabilities (Marcell, 2003).

Nos. 17-18: Body Composition and Obesity: The most favorable approach to effective weight loss includes committed cardiovascular exercise of up to 200-to-300 minutes of moderate-intensity activity accumulated over five-to-seven days per week (ACSM, 2006). Meanwhile, resistance training and circuit training have shown meaningful changes in body composition (Marx et al., 2006).

No. 19: Arthritis: Consistent exercise improves aerobic capacity, muscle strength, joint mobility, functional ability and mood without apparent increases to joint symptoms or diseases (Finckh, Iversen & Liang, 2003). High-impact exercise should be replaced with swimming and other water exercises, which are much safer on weight-bearing joints.

No. 20: Stress: Published investigations conclude that individuals with improved fitness levels are capable of managing stress more effectively than those who are less fit (Hassmen, Koivula & Uutela, 2000). Cardiovascular exercise appears to derive the most stress reduction benefits.

No. 21 Mood State: Cardiovascular and resistance exercise can positively affect various mood states, including tension, fatigue, anger and vigor in normal and clinical populations (Lane & Lovejoy, 2001; Fox, 1999).

No. 22: Depression: The antidepressant action is one of the most commonly accepted psychological benefits of exercise. Cardiovascular and resistance exercise seem to be equally beneficial in producing antidepressant effects (Brosse, et al., 2002).

No. 23: Anxiety: Most of the research in this area indicates that aerobic exercise is most beneficial in reducing anxiety, yet a few studies also show a slight decrease with resistance training and flexibility exercises (Scully, et al., 1998).

No. 24: Self-Esteem: Exercise also has a positive influence on self-esteem (Callaghan, 2004). Studies indicate that aerobic exercise may have a more pronounced impact than anaerobic activity, but there is little research currently on the correlation between resistance training and self-esteem.

No. 25: The “Weekend Warrior”: A recent study (Lee and colleagues, 2003) focused on this subpopulation of exercisers who do only one or two bouts of exercise a week, perhaps because of time or choice. The study found that “weekend warriors” who had no other major risk factors (and expended at least 1,000 kilocalories in this sporadic exercise pattern) had a lower risk of dying prematurely than their sedentary counterparts.

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