

30-Minute Exercise More Effective Against Obesity Than Intense 1-Hour Workout

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Health officials fighting the “battle of the bulge” against obesity just got some good news. According to new research, 30 minutes of light, daily exercise can help someone shed more pounds than an hour of intensive training.



Additionally, those who committed to 30 minutes of daily exercise reported having higher levels of energy and more motivation to take the small steps necessary to lose the weight. The researchers at the University of Copenhagen who conducted the study say this could go a long way in battling the extremely harmful side effects of obesity.

Their study is now published in the Scandinavian Journal of Public Health.

“Obesity is a complex social problem requiring a multidisciplinary approach,” said Professor Bente Stallknecht from the Department of Biomedical Sciences at the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences, University of Copenhagen in a statement.

“In a new scientific article we combine data from biomedical studies of the subjects’ bodies with ethnological data on their experiences during the 13-week trial period.”

Following this trial the test subjects were given qualitative interviews to understand on a deeper level how this exercise regimen affected their lives. Professor Stallknecht and PhD student Anne Sofie Gram recruited over 60 slightly overweight but otherwise healthy men to take part in this study. Some of these men were asked to simply exercise for a full 30 minutes every day. A second group of men were asked to undertake a one-hour, strenuous training regime every day.

Following the three month study, the men who exercised for just 30 minutes a day lost, on average, 7.94 pounds. By contrast, those men who exercised twice as long and twice as hard lost an average of 5.95 pounds at the end of the experiment.

The hard data shows a preference towards what the researchers call “light weight” 30-minute exercises. Yet they weren’t only interested in solid figures and also wanted to understand how this kind of exercise program affected the men on different levels, including culturally, emotionally and psychologically.

“The qualitative data offer a possible explanation for the surprising biological data,” says Astrid Jespersen, an ethnologist and associate professor at the University of Copenhagen.

“The subjects in the test group that exercised the least talk about increased energy levels and a higher motivation for exercising and pursuing a healthy everyday life. They take the stairs, take the dog for an extra walk or cycle to work. In contrast, the men who exercised for one hour a day, after training, felt exhausted, demotivated and less open

to making a healthy change. We are thus seeing that a moderate amount of exercise will significantly impact the subjects' daily practices.”

Jespersen's desire to understand the multi-faceted effects of obesity doesn't stop at simple exercise. The professor also says the issue of obesity must be tackled at many points by creating a holistic approach to the problem.

This isn't the first time research has shown that even the littlest steps can go a long way in fighting obesity and staying healthy. An April report by the American Heart Association (AHA) showed that a brisk walk was just as effective as running.

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