

Exercise: Just 15 minutes a day has benefits

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By Eryn Brown

Exercising for just 15 minutes most days of the week — about half as much time as doctors in most countries recommend — appears to provide health benefits, Taiwanese researchers reported Monday in the journal Lancet.



In most countries, doctors recommend 150 minutes of exercise a week. Dr. Chi-Pang Wen of the National Health Research Institutes and China Medical University Hospital and Jackson Pui Man Wai of the National Taiwan Sport University sought to learn if less activity than that would also make a difference.

Reviewing the health records of 416,175 healthy men and women who had received routine health screenings and had ranked their level of exercise as inactive or low, medium, high or very high activity, **the team found that leisure time physical activity of only 15 minutes was associated with a 14% reduction overall in death, a 10% reduction in cancer mortality and a 20% reduction in cardiovascular disease, compared with that of inactive people. Life expectancy went up three years.**

According to the study, a third of Americans get 150 minutes of exercise per week; East Asians are more sedentary. **Knowing that even short workouts could improve health might help physicians get more people exercising, the authors noted.**

"This advice is very simple and probably easily achievable," wrote Dr. Anil Nigam of the Montreal Heart Institute and Dr. Martin Juneau of the University of Montreal wrote in an accompanying commentary. "The knowledge that as little as 15 minutes per day of exercise on most days of the week can substantially reduce an individual's risk of dying could encourage many more individuals to incorporate a small amount of physical activity into their busy lives."

In other words: No more excuses, you do have the time to exercise.

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