

[IMAGE]

Walk For Healthy Aging

Are you looking to age gracefully? Try to incorporate regular exercise into your schedule. A new study found that regular exercise, including walking, significantly reduced the chance that a frail older person will become physically disabled.

The results, published in the journal JAMA, highlighted the need for frequent movement.

The Lifestyle Interventions and Independence for Elders, or LIFE, trial, scientists at eight universities and research centers around the country began working with older volunteers who were sedentary.

A total of 1,635 sedentary men and women aged 70 to 89 were randomly assigned to either an exercise or an education group.

Those in the education assignment were asked to visit the research center once a month or so to learn about nutrition, health care and other topics related to aging.

The exercise group received information about aging but also started a program of walking and light, lower-body weight training with ankle weights, going to the research center twice a week for supervised group walks on a track, with the walks growing progressively longer. They were also asked to complete three or four more exercise sessions at home, aiming for a total of 150 minutes of walking and about three 10-minute sessions of weight-training exercises each week, according to the reports.

So, what did they find? By the end of the study, the exercising volunteers were about 18 percent less likely to have experienced any episode of physical disability during the experiment. They were also about 28 percent less likely to have become persistently, possibly permanently disabled, defined as being unable to walk those 400 meters by themselves.

Walking can pay off if you are looking to avoid disabilities in your older age.

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