

[IMAGE]

More Activity = Lower Health Care Costs

So maybe you don't care about exercise. Maybe you don't care about eating right. Maybe you don't care about following any of the established recommendations for living a long, healthy life. But do you care about your wallet?

Previous research has suggested that \$4.3 to \$5.6 billion could be saved annually if 10% of inactive adults began doing one simple thing on a consistent basis: walking. Examining this potential cost savings further, the authors of a study in *Physician and Sportsmedicine* compared direct medical expenses (for a single calendar year: 1987) of active vs. inactive men and women, using actual medical expenditures from 35,000 U.S. consumers from 14,000 households.

Individuals reporting at least 30 minutes of moderate or strenuous physical activity three times or more per week were classified as physically active; those who reported less weekly activity were classified as inactive. Results showed that:

- Average direct medical costs were substantially lower in the active group vs. the inactive group (\$1,242 vs. \$2,277).
- Overall, active individuals reported less hospital stays, physician visits, and use of medications, with major savings derived from lower hospitalization costs (\$391 for active, \$613 for inactive).
- Physical activity saved \$330 dollars per person, equating to \$29.2 billion in 1987. Calculated to the present dollar value, this equals \$76.6 billion in the year 2000 alone!

Reference:

Pratt M, Macera CA, Wang G. Higher direct medical costs associated with physical inactivity. *The Physician and Sportsmedicine*, Oct. 2000: Vol. 28, No. 10, pp1-11.

For more information on fitness and athletic conditioning, go to

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