[IMAGE]

Ignore Me Now, Pay Me Later!

Perhaps the most important (yet most neglected) part of the human anatomy is the heart, but cardiorespiratory fitness is a factor in overall health. Reseachers conducted exercise tests over a 16-year period, factoring in a subset of 2,478 participants available to repeat the exercise tests conducted at the outset of the study.

Men and women 18 to 30 years of age were administered a maximal treadmill test (with increasing incline and speed until the subject reached physical exhaustion), gauging their overall health, and as late as 2001, given repeated tests and checked for their health status. Adjustments were made for age, race, sex, smoking, family history of diabetes, hypertension, and myocardial infarction.

Results: Those shown to be of "low fitness" were between three and six times more likely to develop diabetes, hypertension, and the metabolic syndrome than those espousing a "high-fitness" regimen. This study was performed in conjunction with another study, "Coronary Artery Risk Development in Young Adults", sponsored by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute; the subset repeating the exercise was a portion of a group of 5,115 participants from Chicago, Minneapolis, Birmingham and Oakland.

Ultimately, the study results confirm what your parents and doctors have told you: Your health habits today - good and bad - will affect your lifestyle years down the road.

Reference:

Carnethon MR, Gidding SS, Nehgme R, Sidney S, Jacobs DR, Liu K. Cardiorespiratory fitness in young adulthood and the development of cardiovascular disease factors. *JAMA* December 17, 2003:290(23), pp 3092-3100.

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