

[IMAGE]

It's Never Too Late to Exercise

By Editorial Staff

Think you're destined to die before your time because you've been sedentary (physically inactive) your entire life? Not so fast. While consistent exercise is associated with a host of health and wellness benefits including significant reductions in disease risk, new research suggests even middle-aged and older adults who haven't been active their entire lives can benefit dramatically from a little more movement.

Researchers evaluated the exercise habits of more than 315,000 adults ages 50-71 by reviewing surveys each study participant had completed from adolescence, then tracked them for almost 15 years to see who passed away over that time period. Compared to participants who stayed essentially inactive throughout their lives (including the study period), participants who were not active previously, but became active from ages 40-61, were 35 percent less likely to die of all causes during the study period.

Interestingly, people who had been active from the start (youth through middle age) were only slightly less likely to die during the study period: 36 percent less likely compared to the permanently inactive group. In other words, the health benefits of physical activity (at least in terms of longevity) were essentially the same regardless of whether one exercised his/her entire life or became active starting in middle age or older.

possible - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark With respect to two of the major causes of death, cardiovascular disease and cancer, the risk reductions were also remarkably similar: 42 percent lower risk of death from heart disease and 14 percent lower risk of death from cancer for always exercisers (compared to people who stayed sedentary their entire lives), vs. 43 percent and 16 percent lower risks, respectively, for late exercise adopters. Study findings were published in *JAMA Network Open*.

The moral to this story: You're never too old to start exercising – and reaping the longevity benefits. Talk to your doctor for more information on why exercise matters, and ask for help designing a consistent physical activity program suitable to your health and fitness needs.

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