

[IMAGE]

What If Exercise Could Counteract Chronic Inflammation?

By Editorial Staff

Actually, *it can*, according to research. Acute inflammation is caused by injury: a sprain, strain, etc. Your body responds to the injury with inflammation to protect the injured area until it heals. Case in point: swelling around an ankle after you twist it. The area may also get red – another sign of acute inflammation. This type of inflammation is actually a good thing: it's a sign your body is initiating the healing process.

But there's also chronic inflammation, which usually isn't as readily apparent ... and can be dangerous. Chronic inflammation isn't localized; your entire body is "inflamed," which can lead to immune system dysfunction, cellular damage and disease, including cancer.

Fortunately, exercise may be a key weapon to counteract this type of inflammation. Researchers have found that human muscle appears to block the damaging effects of chronic inflammation when the muscle is exercised – in particular, a pro-inflammatory molecule called interferon gamma. In the study, published in *Science Advances*, the researchers simulated chronic inflammation in muscle cells by exposing them to high levels of interferon gamma for one week, during which time the muscles atrophied and lost significant strength. When they simulated an exercise regimen by stimulating the muscles with electrodes, the muscles almost completely counteracted the effects of the chronic inflammation. According to the researchers, the exercising muscles "were directly opposing the pro-inflammatory signal induced by interferon gamma."

The power of exercise continues to be revealed! If you're not currently participating in a regular muscle-toning/building regimen and/or are experiencing symptoms or received bloodwork results indicative of chronic inflammation, talk to your doctor about how exercise and other simple strategies can help reduce your inflammation and get you on the road to better health.

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