

[IMAGE]

Is Fitness More Important Than Weight Loss for Health?

By Editorial Staff

We're in the throes of an obesity epidemic, that's to be sure, and it doesn't discriminate based on age; more and more children are joining the millions of adults of all ages with serious weight issues. While weight-loss programs abound, perhaps it's time to consider a more important factor when it comes to our health: fitness. Here's why.

Research suggests fitness is more important than weight loss for combating obesity-related health conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, and bone / joint issues. In a review paper published in *iScience*, research suggest increasing physical activity and improving fitness should be the #1 priority for getting healthier and reducing mortality risk. That's because in their review of the research, "The risk reduction associated with increasing fitness and physical activity was consistently greater than that associated with intentional weight loss."

exercise - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark One reason, according to the authors, is that emphasis on weight loss alone can lead to repeated loss / gain cycling (often referred to as "yo-yo dieting") that come with its own health risks; while in general, common fitness activities present little to no risks. They also make the following points in support of their position that fitness tops weight loss for overall health:

1. "The mortality risk associated with obesity is largely attenuated or eliminated by moderate-to-high levels of cardiorespiratory fitness (CRF) or physical activity (PA)."
2. "Most cardiometabolic risk markers associated with obesity can be improved with exercise training independent of weight loss and by a magnitude similar to that observed with weight-loss programs."
3. "Weight loss, even if intentional, is not consistently associated with lower mortality risk."

If you're struggling with your weight and/or suffering the health consequences, talk to your doctor about these research-based recommendations that put the emphasis on fitness, not weight as the priority for your long-term health. Your doctor can help design a physical activity program that improves your health - and probably will help you drop the extra pounds at the same time.

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