

[IMAGE]

Double the Benefit

By Editorial Staff

We know exercise is good for the heart – but new research suggests it's even more beneficial for people suffering from anxiety or depression. How much better? How about *double* the benefit. That's significant because anxiety / depression isn't going away; in fact, evidence suggests it's increased dramatically since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Researchers analyzed health records of 50,000-plus patients, some of whom had suffered a cardiovascular event, such as a heart attack or blocked artery. Among patients who exercised at least 500 MET (metabolic equivalent) minutes per week – a measure of how much energy you expend during exercise, their risk of suffering an adverse cardiovascular event was significantly (17 percent) lower.

But for people with a diagnosis of anxiety or depression, the story gets even better. Patients with anxiety or depression who achieved 500 MET minutes per week had more than double the reduced cardiovascular risk compared to people without anxiety or depression who also achieved 500 MET minutes weekly. Study findings were presented at the American College of Cardiology's 71st Annual Scientific Session in April 2022.

stomach health - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark So, let's put MET minutes in perspective for everyone out there who wants to reduce their cardiovascular risk, but doesn't "get" MET minutes or know how to calculate them. For reference, the amount of energy you expend while at rest (inactive) has a MET score of approximately one. Higher energy activities have higher MET scores; for example, walking briskly is about five METs (defined as expending five times the energy you do when you're resting), while running (approximately 10-minute mile pace) is nearly 10 METs.

Thus, to determine how to achieve 500 MET minutes per week, multiply the MET scores of the physical activity you perform by the number of minutes you perform each activity. Using our examples above, that means 500 MET minutes per week consists of 100 minutes of brisk walking (100 minutes x MET score of five for walking = 500) or 50 minutes of running (50 minutes x MET score of 10 for running = 500). Talk to your doctor for more information about the benefits of physical activity for cardiovascular health, anxiety or

depression symptoms and more.

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