

[IMAGE]

The Guidelines Matter

By Editorial Staff

We're told about physical activity guidelines all the time, but for many people, such recommendations are viewed as either unattainable or unnecessary. First, let's tackle the unnecessary, which a new study shows is simply not the case, for one simple reason. Then we'll discuss how to make what some consider unattainable attainable.

Meeting (or beating) recommended physical activity guidelines ups your chances of living longer compared to not meeting them, pure and simple. According to a study that analyzed physical activity and health records of 100,000 U.S. adults over a 30-year period, achieving the Dept. of Health and Human Services' current exercise recommendation (150-300 minutes per week of moderate physical activity or 75-150 minutes / week of vigorous physical activity) were significantly less likely to die compared to adults who failed to achieve the recommendation. The reduced risk of mortality wasn't small; we're talking 19-21 percent.

For people who exceeded the guidelines, the benefits were ever better – interestingly, more so for those who did more moderate physical activity vs. vigorous activity. Adults who performed 2-4 times the recommended amount of vigorous activity had a 21-23 percent lower mortality rate; the rate reduction jumped to 26-31 percent for adults performing 2-4 times the recommended amount of moderate activity. Findings appear in *Circulation*, the flagship journal of the American Heart Association.

weight lifting - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark OK, so let's start with a common concern: *I don't have the time and/or energy to be physically active that often every week!* First of all, you're probably doing more physical activity than you give yourself credit for; moderate activity is as simple as walking briskly. Do that for 30 minutes every day and you'll have achieved 210 minutes per week; essentially the mid-range of the moderate-activity guideline.

Thinking you'd rather spend less time being active by upping the intensity? OK, then try jogging, lap swimming or strength training. Don't like to feel like you're exercising? Dancing and heavy gardening also count as vigorous physical activities.

The bottom line: Physical activity guidelines matter, so find ways to move that body of yours every day. You'll reap the benefits in terms of a longer, healthier life than if you just sit around.

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