

[IMAGE]

Time to Step It Up

By Editorial Staff

Physical activity is an important component of graceful aging. Not only does it improve your health, but it also often gets you outside, which can improve your mood and reduce stress compared to staying cooped up in your house all day. However, with age often comes some degree of functional limitation that can reduce your physical activity capabilities – at least compared to your younger years. That’s dangerous, because cardiovascular issues increase in likelihood with age; and exercise has been shown repeatedly to improve heart health.

Walking to the rescue! Walking 6,000-8,000 steps per day significantly increases cardiovascular health among older adults, according to a meta-analysis of eight studies involving more than 20,000 people (average age: 63 years) from the U.S. and 42 other countries. All participants used wearable devices to measure steps and were tracked for an average of six years to assess heart health.

Walking reduced the risk of cardiovascular disease events, defined in the analysis as fatal and nonfatal coronary heart disease, stroke, and heart failure. More steps lowered CVD risk compared to fewer steps. Findings appear in *Circulation*, a research journal of the American Heart Association (AHA).

Of note, number of steps taken was more important than the speed / intensity at which participants walked, said the researchers. That means if you’re an older adult whose days of running up mountains or racing around the track have long passed you by, these findings are for you! For heart health, overall health and just feeling great, it’s time to step it up.

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