

[IMAGE]

Exercise Reduces Diabetes Risk in Postmenopausal Women

The natural changes associated with menopause can be accompanied by added risk for osteoporosis, heart disease and diabetes. Fortunately, evidence also suggests that consistent exercise may help to reduce the risk of developing these debilitating, chronic conditions. (See "Maintain Strong Bones with Exercise" in the Sept. 1999 issue of *To Your Health*, and "Keep Your Heart Healthy with Resistance Training" in the Aug. 1999 issue.)

A study in the *American Journal of Public Health* suggests that exercise may also help prevent diabetes in postmenopausal women. Nearly 100,000 women (aged 55-69 years of age) completed a diet and lifestyle questionnaire in January 1986. Subsequent questionnaires mailed, completed and returned over the next 12 years documented new diagnoses of diabetes.

For the 41,836 women who completed all questionnaires, greater leisure-time physical activity was associated with a reduced risk of type II (adult) diabetes. This association was stronger with increasing levels of activity, such that the most active women had approximately half the risk as the least active women in the study. These results were maintained even after the authors considered other potential factors such as smoking, alcohol intake, hormone replacement therapy, and family history of the disease.

Reference:

Folsom AR, Kushi LH, Hong CP. Physical activity and incident diabetes mellitus in postmenopausal women. *American Journal of Public Health*, Jan. 2000: Vol. 90, No. 1, pp134-38.

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