

[IMAGE]

## Exercise: Is Quality or Quantity Better?

There is a long-standing debate as to whether the intensity or the duration of exercise is more important for good health. It's been shown that men who exercise at high intensity cut their risk for heart disease nearly in half, compared to sedentary men, yet similar risk reduction also applies to low-intensity exercise, and varying levels of energy expenditure.

Almost 50,000 men ages 40-75 completed multiple questionnaires from 1986-1998 assessing diet, lifestyle, medical history and exercise. In this study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, walking/hiking; jogging; bicycling; tennis; swimming; rowing; calisthenics; outdoor work; weight training; and racquetball were all considered as types of exercise.

Higher amounts of physical activity did translate into corresponding reductions in risk for coronary heart disease (CHD); men with the greatest amount of activity reduced their risk 30%, compared to sedentary men. But wait - high exercise intensity also independently lowered risk for CHD - 17% more than low-intensity exercises. Activities that offered the most significant reductions in CHD risk included running, weight training and rowing. A faster walking pace was found to reduce heart-disease risk more than a slower pace, regardless of the total time spent walking.

So, which is better: intense exercise for a couple of hours per week, or low-intensity exercise for several hours per week? There is no definite answer. It appears, though, that regular aerobic exercise each week, combined with some high-intensity training, may be optimal. Your chiropractor can help you determine the exercise-intensity level that is safe for you, and help you focus on maintaining that level of fitness.

### *Reference:*

Tanasescu M, Leitzmann MF, et al. Exercise type and intensity in relation to coronary heart disease in men. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 2002;288(16), pp. 1994-2000.

Go to <http://www.chiroweb.com/tyh/sports.html> for more information about fitness.

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